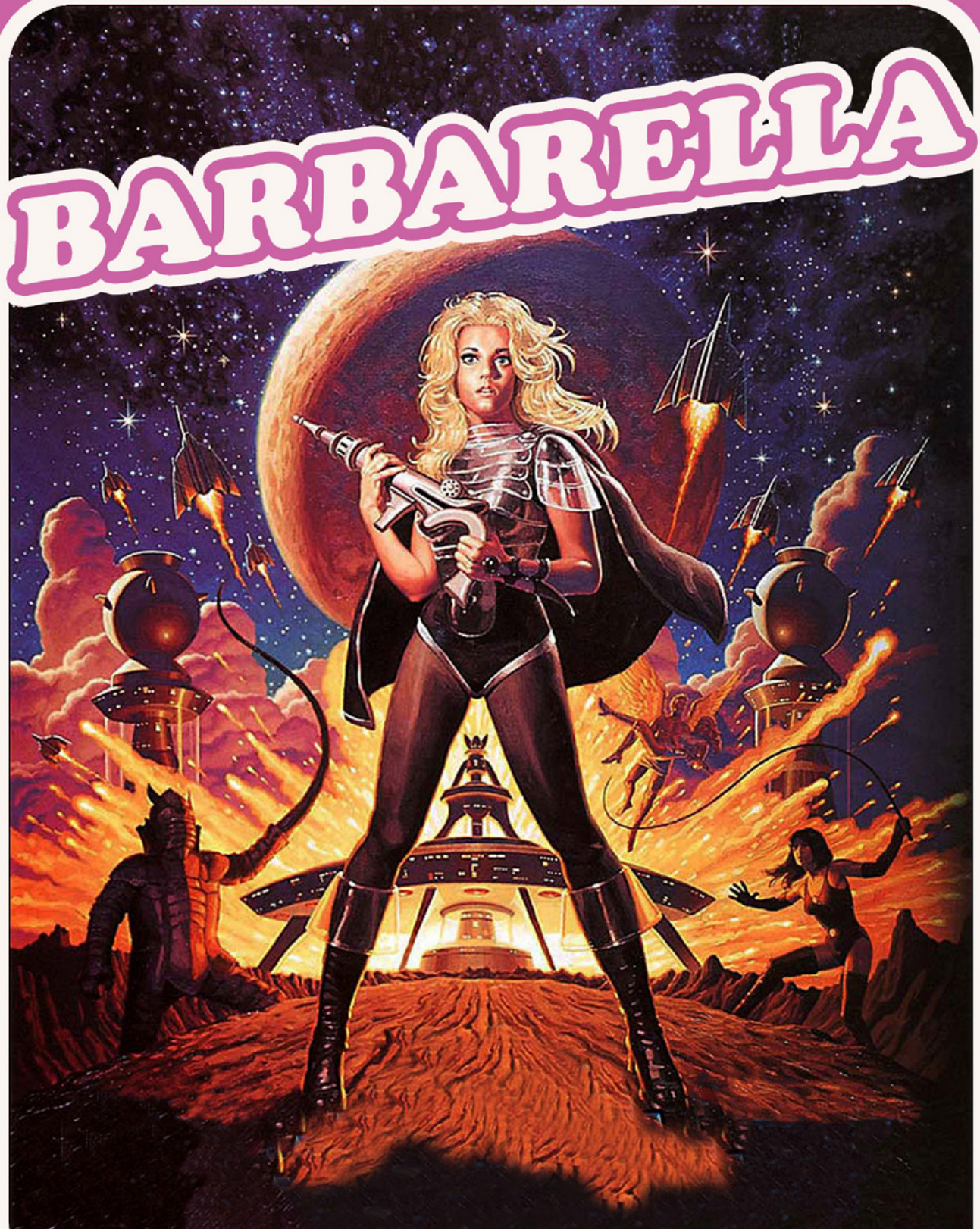


SYNERGY MAGAZINE

VOLUME 2: NO.3

EXPLORING THE BOUNDARIES OF CINEMA AND LITERATURE



RETRO CINEMA ISSUE

SYNERGY MAGAZINE

Retro Cinema

IN THIS ISSUE....



Publication Details

Print and Digital Editions
4-6 Times a year (minimum)
Online—Daily Updates

Website

<http://www.synergy-magazine.com>

Address

PO Box 492
Armidale NSW 2350
Australia

Editor : Robert Black

Sub Editor: Bob Estreich

EDITORIAL
REGIONS
COPYRIGHT
NOTICES
COMPETITIONS
NEWS IN BRIEF
FEATURES

THE TWILIGHT ZONE
CREATURE FEATURE
THE RETRO VISIONS OF CHRISTOPHER
MIHM
GODZILLA
THE LIBRARIAN

BOOK & COMICS REVIEWS
DVD REVIEWS
RETRO EROTICA
RETRO HORROR
RETRO SCI FI
WORLD CINEMA
THINKING TIME
MAGAZINES IN REVIEW
MUSIC & COMEDY IN REVIEW
ART & ARTISTS
TOYS & COLLECTIBLES



REVIEWERS

Synergy Review Team includes: Robert Black, Bob Estreich, Jeremy & Renata Kong & occasional others.

A very special thanks to all those who helped with Synergy as we moved premises.

EDITORIAL...



Welcome to Synergy Volume 2 No 3: The Retro Cinema Edition !

We hope you are enjoying our thematic approach to reviews with a special focus in each issue. We are slowly getting some idea of what subjects you are most excited by and these will be covered each year. At present our most likely themes will be Cult Cinema, Retro Cinema, Horror, an Xmas Edition and perhaps a few others such as Giallo & Crime, Indie and World Cinema.

We are working to balance reviews of new and recently released titles with classic and re-releases titles which fit within each specific theme. Of course we will continue our regular departments which include Books, Magazines & Comics, Music and Comedy, World Cinema, Documentaries (Thinking Time) and Collectibles.

The Collectibles have been well received and we hope to have more each issue. Lots of fun and strange items from plastic toys to plush, weird collectibles to games.

We are also developing a Games section covering pertinent PC, Xbox 360 and PS3 titles. We will *not* be covering sports, kids and general games which are so ho-hum. We will review mature games such as horror, cult, crime, first person shooters and more unusual ones.

Retro Cinema is a very fun and exciting subject covering everything from Horror and Science Fiction to Erotic and Classic Cinema. From **Barbarella** to **The Bride of Frankenstein**, Creature Feature films to **Godzilla**. From the B grade output of Ed Wood to the cool retro trends of classic and World Cinema. We hope you enjoy it.

A thought for the month from Mark Twain..

"When we remember we are all mad, the mysteries disappear and life stands explained."

Enjoy !

Robert Black
Editor



SYNERGY COMPETITIONS



Asylum Giveaway

Madman proudly presents 'Asylum'. A new DVD label featuring a continuing catalogue of cutting edge horror and thriller releases from around the globe. From bumps in the night to bloody frights Madman now have your thriller and horror needs 'smothered' !

Titles include Diary of the Dead, Donkey Punch, The Signal, Fear(s) of the Dark, Frontier(s), Dead in Three Days, Gruesome, King of the Hill and soon to be released Hush.

For reviews of many of the titles look through the reviews section of this issue of Synergy.

Thanks to Madman Entertainment we have a selection of Asylum titles to give away.

To enter send your details to:
promotions@synergy-magazine.com

Put the title **"Asylum"** in the subject line and make sure you include your name, address and email address.

Winners will be randomly chosen from email entries and send one DVD from the range each.

We will confirm winners via email on 15th June.



INFORMATION



Background on Regions & Reviews

Synergy Reviews DVDs from all regions. The **R** description with each title advises the Region.

1 = USA
2 = UK
3 = Asia
4 = Australia
0 = All region.

NTSC or PAL is used with the ALL REGION CODE and refers to the TV format.

Blu Ray: We only review All Region and Region B titles.

The best reference site for Blu Ray is [blu-ray.com](http://www.blu-ray.com). It includes lots of details about Blu Ray releases and is one of the only reliable sources for information on which Blu Ray releases are ALL REGION.

Web: <http://www.blu-ray.com>

While we review the DVD that has been supplied to us (from whatever region), there may be other editions of the film. Since we are a genre based magazine, the range of titles reviewed will always come from all around the globe.

For international films from the US there are many suppliers including www.amazon.com and Deep Discount www.deepdiscount.com

For international films from the UK there are many suppliers including www.amazon.co.uk.

For rare Asian titles we recommend Asian Cult DVD (<http://asiancult.com>)

For other rare titles we recommend Diabolik DVD (<http://www.diabolikdvd.com>).

For Australia DVDs a good cross retail search engine is DVD Plaza (<http://www.dvdplaza.com.au>)

We have no business relationship with any retailer and only recommend them for your information.

©
COPYRIGHT
All Rights Reserved

SYNERGY MAGAZINE
PO Box 492
Armidale NSW 2350
Australia

Web
<http://www.synergy-magazine.com>

Email
comments@synergy-magazine.com

The print edition Synergy Magazine is published 4-6 times a year and includes all the reviews from the website from the preceding months with extra materials, articles and features extended reviews, added images, screen shorts and special competitions. As of January 2009 features, articles and competitions **ONLY** appear in the digital and print editions.

Digital Edition Special Conditions

The Digital Edition can be downloaded free. It can be printed for personal use only (not for *commercial use*). Distribution by individuals for non commercial use is permitted, indeed encouraged. However, Synergy cannot be reproduced or distributed *commercially* with express written permission.

The Digital Edition cannot be altered or articles used without permission, except for small segments for criticism or review as copyright allows.

The copyright for the majority of images used (screenshots, artwork, cover images etc) are the property of the individual publishers. They should not be reproduced without permission,

The movie posters used are within the public domain.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Redemption TV

We are very pleased be able to announce that our internet based TV 'theatre' is now live and ready for viewing. Basically you can now view our films online as well as on DVD so should you fancy a bit of Brigitte Lahaie in the afternoon and there isn't a DVD player around all you have to do is log onto the website, select your film and you're immediately watching Brigitte or whoever has taken your fancy in action!

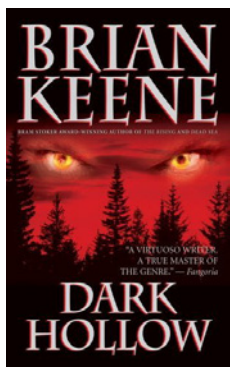


You can build your own virtual online collection and we will developing this site and others over the coming months. Available to view right now are titles like Jean Rollin's *Lips of Blood* and **The Nude Vampire, The Satanic Sluts** and **Saint Francis** starring the amazing Dita Von Teese.

Web: <http://www.redemptionfilmstv.com>

Dark Hollow

Bram Stoker Award winning US horror author Brian Keene and British Fantasy Award winning writer Paul Finch combine forces to create *Dark Hollow*, a return to the classic horror/monster movie based on Brian Keene's best selling novel of the same name (<http://tinyurl.com/dj2fb5>)



After two miscarriages, writer Adam Shay's marriage is on the rocks.

On a walk through local woods rumoured to be haunted, Adam come across a strange sight: a statue of a half-man, half-goat creature, a satyr from ancient legends, which comes to life before his eyes. Soon, all the women in town begin disappearing, summoned to the woods by the satyr's hypnotic piping. When Adam gathers

the menfolk to hunt down the satyr and retrieve the women, what they uncover is an unholy evil bent on protecting itself and spreading its seed.

Award winning short film director Paul Campion will direct from a script by Paul Finch, with Elisabeth Pinto (**Eel Girl, Night of the Hell Hamsters**) producing.

Andrea Clarke (**Dog Soldiers**) will cast the film, with Shane Rangi (**Chronicles of Narnia, Lord of the Rings**) attached to play the role of the evil satyr Hylinus, and New Zealand's Oscar winning Weta Workshop attached to design and create the creature makeup.

Shooting will take place in Kent, England, with Richard Bluck (**Black Sheep, Lord of the Rings**) attached as Director of photography and shooting on 16mm film for a 35mm theatrical release.

Safety Message: The proper use of Condoms



Kill The Record Labels Through MVD Visual US DVD Release

An in-depth documentary exposing the vicious side of the music business featuring 50 Cent, Lloyd Banks, Chamillionaire, Bun B, and many others.



"This riveting film shines a bright light on the dark side of Hip Hop."

Larry Epstein, Film Look Magazine

This documentary film directed by Charles Rand & T. Thomas features some of the hottest artists in hip hop music expressing their views regarding the state of the industry. For decades, hip hop was under the control of the record companies and corporations, but eventually artists adapted the labels' formula and began strategically promoting and marketing their own music. This evolution has created a major conflict within the industry.

"Hip Hop music has become the voice of the urban community," says Rand. "Artists like 50 Cent and Bun B make music about real life situations that happen in their neighborhoods. Generally, artists don't make music about what goes on inside the music business. I made this film to give DJs, artist, and producers a voice. A great documentary is informative and entertaining. I spent a lot of time and energy to make sure the audience walks away from this film with a better understanding of issues that affect hip hop culture and music."

This film includes commentary and insight from 50 Cent, Lloyd Banks, Chamillionaire, Bun B, Maino, DJ Drama, Young Buck, Juelz Santana, Green Lantern, Lil Scrappy, Jim Jones, Red Cafe, Mike Jones, DJ Vlad, Kid Capri, and more.

The record companies, in conjunction with the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), have declared war on these artists. Offices have been raided, mom & pop shops have been closed, and many people have been arrested.



Babelgum have announced that Ceri Levy's **Bananaz**, about virtual cartoon band **Gorillaz**, has been selected to screen on the new, Flash-driven Babelgum website as the first ever global, on-line premiere prior to the film's subsequent theatrical release via EMI including DVD and broadcast rights worldwide.

"As an independent filmmaker it's exciting to be partnering with Babelgum and EMI, two companies who are able to connect and mobilize audiences on both a local and global level, allowing us to maximize revenues in an incredibly difficult distribution environment" **Producer, Rachel Connors**

"Ceri Levy's film is punchy, irreverent and exciting. It is exactly the kind of edgy content that Babelgum's audience wants to see. It also contains very positive messages to aspiring musicians, which sits in line with our commitment to nurturing new talent. Selected clips of the feature-length version are already screening on Babelgum web and mobile."

Valerio Zingarelli, CEO, Babelgum

Bananaz is an un-sanitised, free-wheeling documentary film, taking down the virtual walls of Gorillaz in an intimate, honest and often hilarious account of the working relationship between Damon Albarn and Jamie Hewlett and their extraordinary creative process.

"I am convinced that Babelgum will prove to be the perfect platform upon which to release Bananaz" **Director, Ceri Levy**

"An unconventional film premieres in an unconventional way – when the ingredients are this good, who needs convention?"

Miles Leonard, President, Parlophone Records

From 2000 to 2006 director Ceri Levy filmed alongside the creators behind the scenes, from first drawings, animations, music and the musicians, through to the faces behind the voices of Murdoc, 2D, Noodle and Russel Hobbs.

Made with the spirit of collaboration and madness that is Gorillaz, Bananaz also has appearances from many of those who occasionally pass through this virtual band; Dennis Hopper, De la Soul, Ibrahim Ferrer, Dangermouse, Dan the Automator, D12, Bootie Brown and Neneh Cherry.

Bananaz received its first theatrical premiere at the 58th Berlin Film Festival and went on to receive cult status on the festival circuit from South by South West to Edinburgh.

Babelgum.com will also launch a Gorillaz channel, featuring live concerts, videos, two new games, a fan competition and exclusive Bananaz clips along with its four-week exclusive screening presentation of the film.

Babelgum music has created a platform that allows artists to express themselves in a visually compelling way. It also allows fans to engage and explore music in a content rich environment. Bananaz will be the first of many exclusives planned for the channel.

Web: <http://www.babelgum.com>



WARNER BROS. HOME ENTERTAINMENT GROUP AUSTRALIA TO OFFER CONTENT VIA VIDEO ON DEMAND SAME DAY AS BLU-RAY AND DVD

Critically acclaimed movie **The Curious Case of Benjamin Button** is to be the first 'day and date' title, released on 3rd June 2009.

Warner Bros. Home Entertainment Group Australia will make its content available via Video on

Demand through FOXTEL Box Office Pay Per View, iTunes, Bigpond as well as the online presence of various rental chains on the same day the Blu-ray and DVD becomes available to buy and rent.

The announcement of this move was made by Roger Clarke – Managing Director of Warner Bros. Home Entertainment Group Australia.

"This is a significant step in the development and growth of our industry in Australia, providing an important new opportunity to increase the audience for our content.

Working with our partners, FOXTEL, iTunes, Bigpond and various rental chains, this strategy means we are giving the consumer more options to experience their favourite content when, how and where they want to "said Clarke.

Beginning with the much anticipated **The Curious Case of Benjamin Button**, set for release on 3rd June 2009, consumers will be able to access this film via the internet, PC or set-top box on TV.

The launch of this initiative is supported by FOXTEL, iTunes, Bigpond and various rental chains.

Brian Walsh, FOXTEL's Director of Television said, "This is a great win for FOXTEL subscribers and a major step forward for our Box Office Pay Per View service. More than ever, this decision reinforces the value of having FOXTEL in the home."

"There are more than 5.1 million Australian consumers with broadband connections and a huge appetite for great content. Every day, more and more consumers are acquiring the habit of purchasing their movies digitally.

By offering Video on Demand at the same time as the Blu-ray and DVD release, Warner Bros. is responding to the need for greater convenience and choice that reflects today's changing lifestyles."

"Additionally, by providing reliable, high quality, digital product to consumers in this way, we are offering a legitimate alternative to piracy." added Clarke.



Women in Horror Documentary

Welcome to my Darkside! is about searching into the depths of Women in the Horror Genre.

From Scream Queens to Independent Filmmakers.

Find out what Females are all about when it comes to blood, guts, and boobs!

This Horror Documentary explores women's thoughts of the Horror industry being male dominated and gets into the core of bloodthirsty, sick and twisted minds of Women who love to create images of the grotesque.

What Does Women in horror mean to you?

Well to us at Last Doorway Productions it means how women have created and supported horror films and the genre at all levels and how they feel about the business in general. In the past the films used to be dominated by stereo-

types in a mostly male dominated genre.

So let us take you on a journey into the female psyche and see how they view and create the Horror Genre.

Welcome To My Darkside-Women in Horror! A Documentary from Last Doorway Productions examines women's roles in the horror genre. The film takes a look at women in all aspects of the film-making process, from the scream queens of the 60's and 70's to women producing and directing today's horror hits.

The documentary, due for release mid 2009, is directed by Independent Horror Filmmaker and Horror Host Reyna Young and it explores how women's roles in the industry have changed over the years and how women have led that change in a predominantly male-dominated genre.

We take a look at Actress's, Models, Photographers, Special FX, Directors, Journalists, and Horror Hosts. Featuring in the Documentary is Reyna Young, Shannon Lark, Priscilla Ozuna, Judy Cerda, Felissa Rose, Lynn Lowry, Elske McCain, Nikki K Homicide, Heidi Martinuzzi, Bianca Barnett, April Burril, Ms. Monster, Rachel Grubb and many more....

The DVD will include interviews with women in horror, movie clips and lots of special features.

So stay tuned and check out the Welcome to my Darkside! Website often to get updates and news about this and other features.

Feel Free to join our mailing list to get updates on the latest from Last Doorway Productions.

Welcome to my Darkside ! Website

<http://www.lastdoorwayproductions.com>

Trailer at SpikeTV

<http://www.spike.com/video/welcome-to-my/3152993>

WAKE IN FRIGHT

'Have a drink, mate?

Have a fight, mate?

Have some dust and sweat, mate?

There's nothing else out here.'

Wake in Fright - the lost classic which was at the forefront of Australia's cinematic renaissance in the early 1970s, is now fully restored and ready for rediscovery by audiences.

Wake in Fright made its first appearance at Cannes Film Festival, in competition in 1971. This critically acclaimed landmark Australian film challenged the way Australians saw themselves and their environment.

Based on the novel by Kenneth Cook and directed by Ted Kotcheff (Rambo). **Wake in Fright** starred the late Donald Pleasence, Gary Bond and Chips Rafferty and marked the first feature film appearance of a young Jack Thompson. **Wake in Fright** follows a young outback school-teacher whose eagerly anticipated summer holiday becomes an alcohol-fuelled descent into violence and despair.



The film of **Wake in Fright** was long-believed lost until Anthony Buckley traced the original

negatives to a vault in America marked for destruction. The film elements, later determined to be in poor state, were safely recovered and shipped back to Australia by the NFSA & Ausfilm.

With careful archival matching of the negative components, **Wake in Fright** has since been digitally restored to pristine condition by Atlab/Deluxe and the NFSA.

Continuing its commitment to bring new and classic Australian films to contemporary audiences, Madman Entertainment are delighted to be distributing **Wake in Fright** nationally and in New Zealand mid 2009 and provide a new audience with this definitive Australian film.

Dr Darryl McIntyre, Chief Executive Officer of the NFSA said "**Wake in Fright** is one of Australia's most significant yet rarely seen films and I am so proud of the excellent restoration work carried out by the NFSA and our partners Atlab/Deluxe and the support of the 'Wake in Fright Trust' and especially the dedication of Anthony Buckley.

After so many years to find and then preserve **Wake in Fright**, we are delighted that the newly restored film is at last available for audiences to enjoy the original cinematic experience."

Anthos Simon, General Manager of Atlab/Deluxe said "Atlab/Deluxe was honoured to be chosen to partner with the NFSA in order to complete the digital restoration of *Wake in Fright*. Initially we preserved the original camera negatives to film and used these new components to create a digital intermediate.

This allowed us to use advanced techniques to digitally restore the image to its original form. We then transferred back to film to produce new 35mm prints with re-mastered Dolby Digital sound.

I am immensely proud of the superb digital restoration that has been accomplished by our team of passionate and dedicated film/digital artists.

We want to thank Anthony Buckley for his passion to save the original film negatives and the NFSA who always work hard to preserve Australia's film heritage."

Anthony Buckley AM, editor of *Wake In Fright* and Trust President, said 'The *Wake in Fright* Trust' is pleased to be working with the NFSA and Madman Entertainment, and we are especially grateful for the time and effort Anthos Simon and his colleagues at Atlab/Deluxe have devoted to this superb restoration and also to Raena Lea Shannon and her colleagues at Frankel Lawyers who worked pro bono tirelessly over many years to clarify the legal issues and the subsequent ownership of *Wake in Fright* to enable it to be re-released to an eager new audience."

James Hewison, Theatrical Distribution Manager of Madman Entertainment said "Anthony Buckley's dogged determination and Atlab/Deluxe's extraordinary collaboration with the NFSA in putting this national treasure back into public view is truly a collective act of great cultural significance and heritage.

Madman is privileged to be presenting *Wake in Fright* and, make no mistake, audiences everywhere will be astonished by this masterwork."

The newly restored **Wake in Fright** will have its Australian premiere at the Sydney Film Festival on Saturday 13 June. *Wake in Fright* opens nationally mid 2009.

Madman Entertainment

Web: <http://www.madman.com.au>



Siren Visual Breathes New Life into Anime !

After six years expanding and diversifying, establishing relationships and a strong presence in areas ranging from Arthouse Cinema to Feature Documentaries, Siren Visual turns their attention to the mainstream anime market in 2009 with a slate of new releases and re-issues.

Beginning in May, Siren will aim to release two anime titles per month, building up the catalogue aggressively over the next year.

"Anime in Australia has reached a maturation point over the last few years" says General Manager Eric Cherry, "Madman has done an excellent job, but no market can achieve its true potential through only one company. With Siren's history in the genre mixed with some fresh blood in the office, we're in a good position to become a reliable supplier for the market."

Siren plans to release Anime titles on DVD more in-line with the Japanese market. "The lag-time between the Japanese broadcast date and the English speaking world's DVD release leaves no room for growth in the market" says Cherry. "Some factors behind this are unavoidable, but an English dub shouldn't be one of them.

A lot of people prefer the Japanese audio track and that's who we're targeting with the initial, subtitle-only releases."

Siren plans to re-issue English dub versions of titles subject to their availability at a cheaper price point with incentives built-in for those who purchased the subtitle versions.

Beginning in May, Siren will re-release the classic **Ova Iria** and 13 Episode series **Nightwalker** (both dubbed/sub versions), following in June with the brilliant, mind-bending **Genius Party** from Studio 4c and the TV series **Tower of Druaga: The Aegis of Uruk** (sub only versions).

Established in 1994, Siren Visual was the first company representing Anime in Australia, having distributed the Manga UK label, Madman and individual titles such as Pokémon throughout the 1990's.

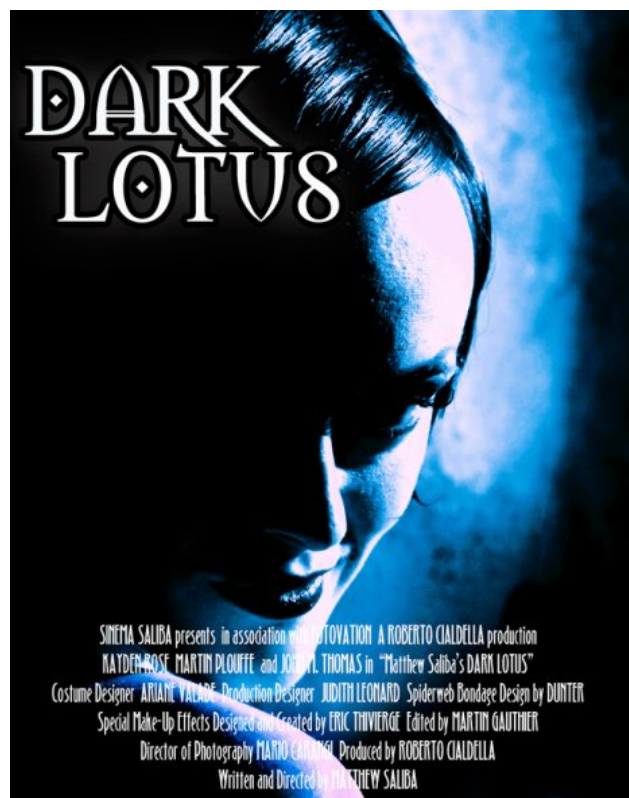
In the year 2000 distribution activities ceased and Siren became a standalone licensing company, outsourcing distribution briefly to the AV Channel, followed by Shock Records and currently through Gryphon Entertainment in Australia, Vendetta Films in New Zealand.

Dark Lotus

Matthew Saliba's **Dark Lotus** is the third and final entry in the "Sado-Erotic Trilogy", a series of films characterized by their unique use of still images to tell a story.

After the death of his wife, Dr. Orlof (John M. Thomas) attempts to grow himself a new lover (Kayden Rose) in the womb of his deceased beloved. Midway through the process, however, he is confronted by a mob of morally outraged villagers, who along with their leader (Martin Plouffe) brutally attack and murder the doctor.

Satisfied with their efforts, the mob leaves without realizing that while they may have been successful in dispatching the good doctor, they failed to kill his experiment and as such, will learn the hard way that Hell hath no fury as a



lover scorned!

Dark Lotus is a sado-surreal film noir shot in sumptuous black-and-white and tinted blue to create a 1920s silent film aesthetic.

The film stars Kayden Rose (the stunningly beautiful actress who played Morpho in **Vampyros Lesbos**), Martin Plouffe (legendary star of Izabel Grondin films such as **Caviar** and **Aspiralux**) and John M. Thomas (the iconic star of Saliba's earlier shorts, **The Manipulator** and **the Subservient** and **Pandora's Paradox**).

Dark Lotus is set to premiere along with the rest of **Frankenstein Unlimited** on 09/09/09.

For more info, check out:

<http://www.myspace.com/frankensteinunlimited>

For details of Saliba's **Vampyros Lesbos**, which was reviewed in an earlier edition of Synergy see:



http://www.myspace.com/vampyros_lesbos

The Twilight Zone

The Twilight Zone (Original Series)
Box Sets (1-5)
Shock
R4 DVD

"There is a fifth dimension beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as space and as timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow, between science and superstition, and it lies between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge. This is the dimension of imagination. It is an area which we call...The Twilight Zone!"

Rod Serling's **The Twilight Zone** was one of the first science fiction and strange tales series created for television and is still considered by many to be one of the best. There may be lots of **Star Wars** and **Star Trek** Fans, but the fans of **The Twilight Zone** are a more reflective bunch and their numbers would surprise many young Sci Fi addicts.

The Twilight Zone hit the screen on October 2nd 1959 and ran until 1965. It received almost immediate international acclaim which continued throughout the five series. It received numerous award nominations winning two Emmys for out-



Rod Serling: The Maestro himself

standing writing (1960 and 1961); the Golden Globe in 1962 for Best TV director/producer and 3 Hugo Awards (Science Fiction Achievement Awards).



William Shatner, later to become the celebrated hero of Star Trek starred in “The Nick of Time”.

The Twilight Zone series took great risks by experimenting with daring stories and exploring themes not previously seen in a TV series. Rod Serling, a well respected screen writer, served as executive producer and head writer. Indeed he wrote some 92 of the show's 156 episodes. "If you can't believe the unbelievability," says Rod Serling to a master class of college writing students, "then there's something wrong in the writing" and this is the formula that made The Twilight Zone successful.

While the plots may have been extravagant and unusual, there was an authenticity in the storytelling which made it compelling viewing.

In addition, by using science fiction as a background, controversial social issues could be explored in a way that general television of the time found difficult. This approach was continued in later television programs such as **Star Trek** which were able to explore such diverse issues as race, gender and related social concerns under the guise of science fiction television.

At the same time **The Twilight Zone** was never a soap opera in space (a complaint later lodged against Star Trek) and avoided being simple morality tales by always placing a very strong emphasis on plot and qual-

ity character acting. While the majority of episodes were only 30 minutes, scripts were carefully written and action paced to produce suspenseful as well as thought provoking television. Many of these early episodes are still considered among the best science fiction cinema ever produced.

The Twilight Zone was an anthology rather than a series with reoccurring characters, accordingly many well known actors starred on the show including such notables as Lee Marvin, Telly Savalas, and William Shatner. Many episodes also gave roles to older stars who made their swansong on The Twilight Zone including Mickey Rooney, Andy Devine, Agnes Moorehead, Cedric Hardwicke, Buster Keaton and Ida Lupino.

Serling also used **The Twilight Zone** to give new actors a chance to get started and many of these went on to become significant in their own right. Some examples include Leonard Nimoy, George Takei, Robert Duvall, Robert Redford, Dennis Hopper and Charles Bronson

Each episode was 30 minutes in length (except for season 4 where the episodes were expanded, some say unsuccessfully, to 60 minutes). Each featured a monologue at the beginning and end of each episode by Rod Serling himself. Many included twist endings and most had a message, sometimes subtle, sometimes more obvious.

It would be impossible to list all of the memorable episodes as the series sustained a remarkably high level of quality throughout its production schedule.

Scene from The Living Doll





A scene from A Thing about Machines

The first season is generally the most celebrated by fans and offered some truly memorable episodes such as "Time Enough at Last", "The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street", "Walking Distance" and "The After Hours".

The second season including such notables as "The Eye of the Beholder" and "The Invaders."

The third season was unusual in that while Serling complained of exhaustion and problems with funding, he still produced some truly outstanding TV including "It's a Good Life", "To Serve Man", and "Five Characters in Search of an Exit". There was also the now classic "I Sing the Body Electric" by Ray Bradbury.

Many people regard the fourth season as a little difficult; the hour long format brought about the "padding" of many episodes and many seemed

A scene from The Howling Man



to lose their punch over the longer time frame. However there were still some episodes which stand out. "Death Ship," "On Thursday We Leave for Home" and "The Bard" are most remembered. Even with the problems due to editing and plot, "On Thursday We Leave for Home" is celebrated as one of the highlights of the whole series.

Season five was the final and returned to the successful 30 minute format. There were quite a few highly successful episodes in this series including "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet", "A Kind of a Stopwatch", "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" and "Living Doll".

Full episode guides to the whole series are available online at:

<http://tzone.the-croc.com/twilight1.html>

One of the things less considered about The Twilight Zone was the high quality music that was used to score it, just some of the composers who contributed music included Bernard Herrmann, Jerry Goldsmith, Nathan Van Cleave, Leonard Rosenman, Fred Steiner, and Franz Waxman.

Shock Entertainment has released the full, remastered and complete "**Twilight Zone: Original Series**" for the first time in Australia on DVD.

This new release has been taken from the original camera negatives and the original magnetic soundtracks with all episodes complete with audio commentaries, interviews and Rod Serling audio lectures.



The series is available in individual season pack from Shock or in a special box set. The special box set features the entire original series of **The Twilight Zone** spread across five digipacks, 29 discs, and 77 hours.

CREATURE

FEATURES



Surprisingly, it didn't all start with *Jaws*. Killer Creatures were a film favorite almost since the birth of the medium. **King Kong** started the trend, and it has gained momentum since. Who could forget the scores of monsters that menaced Tokyo (why Tokyo particularly? Are monsters geographically challenged?) in the 1950s and 1960s?

They were summed up wonderfully in "**All Monsters Attack**", a two-hour early 90s set of trailers and previews. This DVD is still available through Amazon. Godzilla, Mothra, Gamera and all their friends then spawned a copy-cat industry in the United States where some of the greatest but silliest killer animal



films went to screen. Who can forget **Night of the Lepus**? Just about everyone, apparently. Lepus Cuniculus is the common bunny rabbit, and somehow killer bunnies just didn't make it. Janet Leigh did, however – she went on to do Alfred Hitchcock's **Psycho**, one of the great suspense movies of all time. DeForrest Kelly went on to do that other great horror show, **Star Trek**.

The plots soon fell into a fairly common formula. In a secret government experiment / nuclear explosion / mad scientist's laboratory, an otherwise innocent species / individual was mutated / modified / horribly disfigured and became an unstoppable flesh-eating scourge to humanity. After killing / eating / otherwise destroying a

large percentage of the population it would finally be stopped by nuclear weapons / a small group of teenagers, some of whom would be wearing bikinis. There seemed to be a dearth of mad scientists, though.

There was a bit of a pause until the greatest of them all, **Jaws**, came out in 1975. In spite of initial problems with Bruce the Mechanical Shark, the film was simply the best maneater film to ever come out. Hollywood realized that maneating animals were still marketable, and the genre was revived.

There were some really unfortunate attempts, though. **Piranha** (1978) featured fish that had been mutated, as per the formula, in a secret government experiment. You rarely saw the piranhas, but they made the water bubble and they hummed when they attacked. The quality of this film accurately reflected the low budget and twenty days it took to make it. It was down to Roger Corman, a prolific producer of B-grade films, and it did nothing to make the genre more credible.



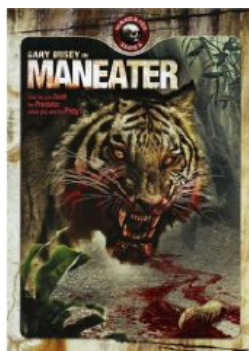
Creature features really needed computer graphics to show their best. The public was becoming a bit more sophisticated in their tastes and no longer expected jerky stop-

Bob Estreich



motion animation or claymation figures, or lizards with cardboard spines glued on their backs. **Anaconda** (giant snake, 1997) wasn't too bad, and likewise for **Grizzly** (bear, 1976) but remakes of **Godzilla** (1998) and **King Kong** (Peter Jackson, 2006) showed what could be done in the genre with CGI.

One that should have used CGI was **Maneater** (2007). A tiger menaces a small town and the local sheriff is the only one who believes that a maneating shark (sorry, TIGER) is actually out there. When we got to see the tiger it was a rather small and tired looking creature, and when it confronted a small boy it wouldn't even eat him (in spite of my urging it on). Gary Busey should have seen the budget of this film and done something else. It's not so much that it was a bad film. It just so closely resembled a certain GOOD fishy maneater film that it was impossible not to draw comparisons.



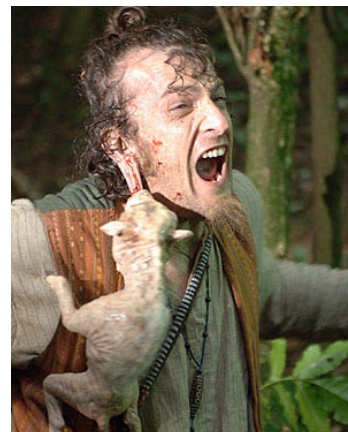
We have had:

- Maneating eels (**Razortooth** 2006, best forgotten),
- Lots of maneating crocodiles (**Rogue** 2008 – Australian, pretty good until halfway through, when it got silly; **Croc** 2008 – the less said, the better; **Lake Placid 1 and 2** 1999 and 2007 – they put out a sequel so someone liked it; **Primeval** – confused plot, but otherwise not bad considering it came from Disney; **Black Water** 2008 – pretty good for an Australian independent),
- A re-released maneating pig (**Razorback**, Australian again, not bad in spite of its age),
- And another grizzly bear (**Grizzly Rage**, 2008 – if a bunch of kids ran over your baby in their car, wouldn't you be a bit annoyed?).

-Maneating tomatoes (**Attack of the Killer Tomatoes**, 1978)

There's something there for almost everyone.

Of course, we had to leave it to the New Zealanders to give us maneating sheep. **Black Sheep** from 2007 was a happy little killer/ maneater/ zombie sheep movie that revived my faith in New Zealand's ability to do it properly. After so much Bored of the Rings (New Zealand, 2001 – 2003), **Black**



Sheep get hunger in **Black Sheep**

Sheep was a pleasant change. It even had a mad scientist. NZ's Weta Workshops seems to have a really good grip on monster CGI.

In 2007 a maneating monster film turned up from a most unlikely source – Korea. **The Host** featured a truly evil-looking reptilian mutant living in a polluted river in a busy city, and the CGI was nothing short of brilliant. The scene as the monster first charges out of the water and slaughters people along the riverbank is unforgettable. A word of caution, though – the Blu-Ray version apparently shows up some of the defects of current-level CGI. And another word of caution- apparently the U.S. is going to remake it in their own image. A sequel is planned from Korea and I await it eagerly. I can't say the same for the U.S. remake.

It looks like the genre is still alive, if not always well. Some original plots would help, and some work on the CGI may be necessary, but it looks like the genre is here to stay.



The Host

Alligator (1980)
R2 DVD
Anchor Bay Home
Entertainment

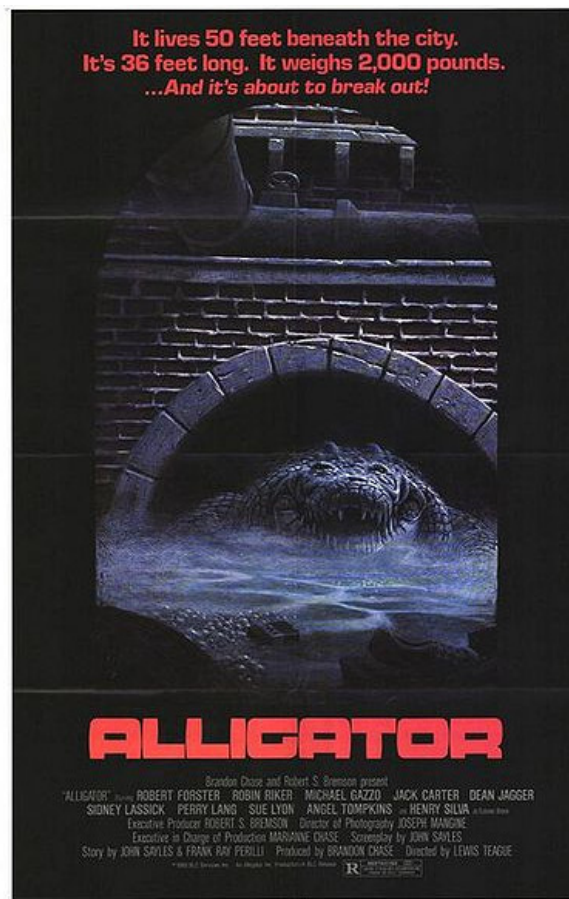
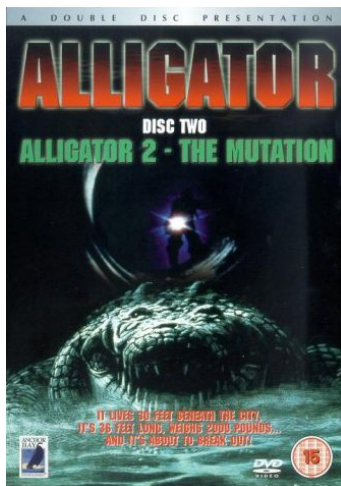
Penning by a John Sayles, who wrote the Jaws-spoof Piranha, Alligator takes the man versus animal theme to a new level.

While attending a local alligator show in Florida Marisa receives a small alligator as a pet. Her father is not amused and flushes the alligator, now named Ramon, down the toilet hoping never to see it again. It somehow survives the journey and lands in the sewers under Chicago. Years later a local pharmaceutical company is undertaking illegal experiments to create a growth hormone. It buys puppies to use as test subjects from a local pet shop. The pet shop owner is then paid to dispose of them after the illegal experiments are completed. He dumps the corpses in a disused section of the local sewer.

What the company does not realize is that Ramon has been happily living off these corpses for years and after 12 years of large doses of experimental growth hormone is now a 32-40 foot long angry and very hungry alligator.

After various dismembered limbs are found at a local water treatment plant, police officer David Madison is sent to investigate. Madison is having a bad time after a raid went wrong in St. Louis and his partner was killed. While he was exonerated, when his current partner is supposedly taken by alligator on a routine investigation nobody seems to take him seriously. Soon, however, a nosey reporter decides to investigate the rumours and wanting a big scoop travels into the Chicago sewer system. He gets more than he bargained for and snaps a few revealing shots of the big creature just before he becomes its next meal. He makes the front page of the Chicago paper but not the way he planned !

Soon the whole town is on the case from an imported Alligator hunter to Madison's new love interest, reptile expert Marisa Kendall. There is actually quite some depth to the plot including



illegal medical experimentation, police drama and local government corruption, not to mention a developing love story.

Sayle offers a good balance of comedy and action with wallops of bitten off limbs, blood and gore. The special effects are fairly well done for 1980 except for the alligator. Ramon seems to be depicted in two different styles. One is a normal live alligator and this works exceptionally well and when photographed in the sewers is especially effective. However to get the "big" shots they clearly use a mechanical alligator

Ramon is out of the sewers and ready for action.



and this is reminiscent of the shark from **Jaws** and the big pig of **Razorback**, neither of which was especially convincing. This really does not take away from the film if you simply accept it as light entertainment.

There are some especially memorable scenes. I especially like when the alligator makes its way to a party being held by the pharmaceutical company bosses and goes on a rampage. Poetic justice to say the least.

This is a great creature feature offering a fun and exciting romp through the sewers of Chicago matched with a high body count and room for a sequel !

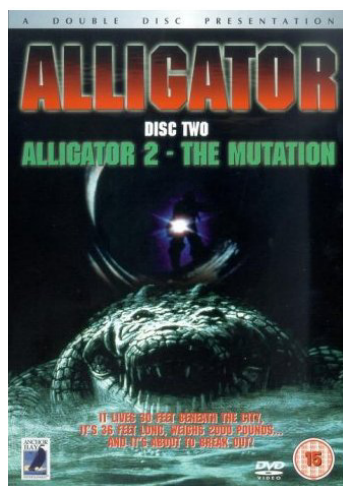
Alligator is packaged in a 2 disc set with Alligator 2 - The Mutation.

**Alligator 2
The Mutation
R2 DVD
Anchor Bay Entertainment**

Alligator 2 The Mutation dates from 1990 but looks very much like an Eighties film. It has very minimum swearing and a lot less gore than Alligator and was essentially given PG rating.

Alligator 2 continues the same theme as Alligator but lacks the humour and bloodshed of its predecessor. It focuses on corrupt businessman Vincent "Vinnie" Brown who is working to build his own business empire at all costs. He has bought off the mayor and has the police under his sway.

Not only is he a "evil" property developer, buying properties on the cheap and turning them into yuppie units for the rich but he has a large share in a local pharmaceutical company. This is the same company whose chemicals created the alligator monster from the first film. Brown is the quintessential stand over man played with great relish and not a smirk in sight. The caricatures in Alligator 2 are deadly serious and hence lack the playfulness they had in the first film.



This time the company has been experimenting with "adrenaline" and been dumping toxic wastes in the city sewers as well in a local lake. It is the same lake around which Brown is developing his top end of the market town houses and resort.

Alligator 2 also continues the same police internal squabbles, local government corruption and related themes. This time it is heavier on the "land corruption" sub story and over emphasizes the love interests to the level of sickening sentimentality. The final scenes when the couples are re-united and the housing estate is returned to the poor as the camera pans out is just too soppy for words.

Anyway, back to the plot. As contracts are signed to turn the development into reality, reports surface of hobos and winos being brutally slaughtered by some sort of animal but nobody takes them seriously. Who would believe a big alligator could be the cause ?

However, soon it becomes clear to Hodges, a maverick cop and his wife, a reptile expert that there is a monster on the loose. It is not a normal alligator but an oversized creature fashioned by chemicals and toxic sludge.

As one would expect the climax involves the alligator making its way to the lake just as Brown is holding an event to launch his business and all hells breaks loose. This time the alligator is not so easily killed. Since it is a "mutant" it is shot, blown up, knifed, poisoned and stabbed but it just won't die. Finally after swallowing some dynamite it is hit with a rocket launcher and explodes.

The look of the alligator has not really improved since the first film. The real life footage is solid but the mechanical alligator looks like it is either on pontoons or wheels. But it just adds to the B grade "creature feature" goodness of the film.

Both Alligator and Alligator 2 The Mutation have been remixed with both DD 5.1 and DTS tracks. Both are uneven and while the mixing does give some good surround sound the voices and music seem tinny and artificial.

This is a fun sequel, nowhere near as amusing or exciting as the first, but since it comes in a double pack with Alligator, it is worth watching at least once !

Black Sheep
R4 DVD
Blu Ray
Icon Distribution 2008

New Zealand has produced some surprisingly impressive and entertaining films, these range from the cult classics of **Bad Taste**, **Meet to the Feebles** and **Braindead** to the **Lord of the Rings** trilogy, all produced by Peter Jackson.

At the same time they have all offered us a range of thought provoking cinema from the early science fiction classic of **Quiet Earth** to the highly renowned **Once Were Warriors**. **Black Sheep** certainly hastens back to the days of NZ cult cinema and reminds me of early Peter Jackson horror classics but done with a much higher budget, much better special effects yet with the same dry even self deprecating humour. It is also very fitting that Peter Jackson's WETA Studio did the special effects !

Dark horror comedy is hard work and **Black Sheep** is one of the success stories. The plot centres on the dangers of genetic engineering while at the same time sending up the excesses of the "green" revolution through one of the main characters who seems to be a parody of the new age "green warrior". Indeed it is the stupidity of a "green warrior" who drops some experimental waste that sets the whole mutation process into top gear.

The storyline is suitably bizarre. When Nathan and Angus are growing up, Angus resents his brother and killing his favourite sheep (Dudley) gives Nathan a complex. After their father dies in a mysterious accident, Angus begins to genetically engineer his animals by using his own "genetic material" to create a new breed of New Zealand of sheep. The scene where Angus is



having "private time" with his favourite little fluffy one has to be seen to be believed !

When Nathan returns to the farm things go disastrously wrong. He is terrified of sheep and needs therapy just to return to the property but when the sheep turn ravenous he has to fight for his life.

Yes, you read right, the sheep turn into flesh eating monsters with beady eyes and a taste for human flesh. When you are bitten you do not die but as the modified genetic material enters your bloodstream you begin to transform into a human sheep hybrid. Some of these creatures are truly astounding looking oversized sheep zombies.

At this stage the film becomes a bit like a "Night of the Living Dead" but with sheep rather than humans !

This is an outrageous movie jammed packed with dry humour, not so subtle innuendo and lots and lots of blood. The violence and gore is suitably over the top and while certainly part of the humour, there are periods of on the-edge-of-your-seat tension and even more than a few startling surprises.

The transfer is clear and solid, the colours are all too real ! The country side is beautiful, the sheep are cute and it all looks idyllic until, of course, they become mutant flesh eaters.

This will end up being a major cult horror classic and as long as you have a good sense of humour and a stomach for gore, it will be a fun viewing experience !

Black Water (2008)

Australia

Directors: David Nerlich
and Andrew Traucki

All Interactive
R4

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

The film has a fairly conventional plot. Husband and wife and sister-in-law are on holidays in the Northern Territory of Australia, where the crocodile population is increasing after hunting was banned. On a fishing trip, a croc attacks their small boat. It capsizes and the guide is taken. Their only experience with crocs is a brief visit to a tourist crocodile farm, but they must survive this croc, which is stalking them.

The spooky atmosphere of the mangrove swamp in which they are trapped is heightened by the general quietness, broken only by the occasional bird call and the sound of ...things ... in the water. Much of the film takes place in various trees in which they are forced to climb to get away from the croc. For much of the early film nothing much happens as the characters come to realise their position. Their reactions vary from the usual hysterical "I'm staying here until someone comes for us" (no one knows where they are) to "let's get back in the boat" (which has already been overturned once by the croc). It is only when a quick reconnaissance shows they are on an island that they reach a decision. They must recover the boat and right it to get out of their predicament.

Adam's noisy attempt to right the boat attracts



the croc, with predictable results. The two sisters must conquer their fears and cooperate to live. The story starts to disintegrate a little at this point, when the croc starts chewing the tree in which the women are sheltering. It also manages to climb into the boat to hunt one of the women, without capsizing it again.

The crocodile shots are a mixture of real crocs and props and are generally rather well done and truly menacing. I am glad the directors decided against adding too many flaky sound effects to the croc – its evil silence is more menacing.

Production quality is high, the casting is good (even if some of the appearances are brief). Diana Glenn and Maeve Dermody spend a lot of time crying, which is probably more realistic than the artificial screaming so common in this type of film. David Nerlich and Andrew Traucki were nominated for Best Director and Maeve Dermody for Best Actress in the 2008 Inside Film Awards. The extras include the usual "Making Of", directors' comments, and deleted scenes.

Strangely, the film was widely distributed overseas since 2007 before this R4 version was finally released in Australia.

It's hard to be original any more in a creature feature. Most of it has already been done, and what's not been attempted has usually been left alone for a good reason. This film stands out well against **Rogue**, another recent Australian croc film. Killer Croc films are fairly common, and this one is not particularly original, but it is still very well done.



Blood Monkey
RHI Entertainment
Genius
Entertainment
R1 DVD

Blood Monkey is part of the maneater series which was made for the Sci Fi channel. They were made for television and this was the first release in the series dating from January 2007. Since it was a made for TV production I think we need to give it more than a little slack. It is obvious from the outset that the budget is not high and that the film relies more on mood than on special effects.

The series improved as time went on and some of the later films certainly seemed to have a little more by the way of plot and special effects. **Blood Monkey**, however, is a good start and is actually superior to quite a lot of other B grade Creature Feature films.

There is one major name actor in the film F.Abraham Murray, who is a bit beyond his prime and the rest are non descript actors and actresses. That being said they do a reasonable job with roles which are fairly stereotypical – there is the jock, the nerd, the bimbo, the stoic hero, the love interest, the mad scientist, the devoted warrior and so on.

Blood Monkey spends a lot of time developing mood, atmosphere and a storyline with loads of potential. It begins with an attempt to trap what

A bit beyond his prime: F.Abraham Murray



A few shocks, occasional bloodshed and suspense keeps you on your toes.

looks like a bloody big ape, later we learn these are actually a new species on the evolutionary tree. The capture goes awry with devastating consequences. Soon, however, a new supply of cannon fodder is on the way in the form of a group of wet behind the ears students.

They arrive expecting “working experience” archaeology but actually get drawn into the quest for this elusive evolutionary quirk. Soon they realize that it has an intelligence equal to or greater than man’s but has evolved with an emphasis on the “ape” side and is hence brutal and savage, especially when its territory is invaded.

Blood Monkey is a strange film; there is lots of mood, great environmental photography and even some intriguing character development as the various members of the team play off each other. There are some good shocks, occasional flashes of blood and gore and a reasonable level of action.

The one thing missing is the creature. You see glimpses here and there, some “Predator” like vision effects and finally when you see the creature it is a letdown.

For all that I enjoyed **Blood Monkey**, regardless of its limitations it has enough atmosphere and mood to make it a enjoyable viewing experience.

Genius Products
Maneater Site

<http://www.geniusproducts.com/>



The Hive
R1 DVD
Genius Entertainment
2008



A fascinating genre within Science Fiction has been the exploration of man versus animals and insects. The fear of atomic war and radiation triggered the first wave of such films in the Fifties and the sheer diversity of these films can be bewildering.

From giant ants to Godzilla, mutant creatures to gorillas gone wild, they have all become part of the history of the genre. There are so many films which can fit into this genre from **Godzilla** and all its derivatives to **The Fly**, **Eight Legged Freaks**, **Slither** and more, even **Jaws** fits into here at a stretch. That quintessential tale of **Moby Dick** in many ways is just as much about an animal and its memories of being hunted as about human obsession.

With the development in ecological awareness and man's destructive effect on the environment new variations developed as benign species "fought back" or worse, scientific solutions turned against man and created hybrids or gave animals (and insects) the ability to behave in new ways. Genius Entertainment has created a series exploring these movies called **Maneater**. This is the ninth in the series.

They are interesting explorations of various themes within the genre made on limited budgets with varying degrees of success. **The Hive**

Hungry ants make mincemeat of locals !



has an intriguing premise and an excellent plot though it is let down somewhat by CGI which was obviously made on a budget. Being fair, this is one of the major problems with Science Fiction, how can you make a film which has some 200,000,000 flesh eating ants without very costly special effects? If you overlook its limitations in this department however, **The Hive** is excellent entertainment.

Horace Lennart runs Thorax Industries, a high tech solution to insect extermination problems.

This is not a small scale business; it works with countries around the world dealing with plague level ant and insect infestations. For a number of years they have battled against animals in an unnamed pacific country using a special formula. Lennart has developed as well as fire throwers and plasma guns. However, each time the ants return they seem more organized and more aggressive, as the film opens they eat a woman and her child ! The ants are not only destroying towns but consuming their occupants.

As the Thorax team sets out to destroy the new infestation they find it is the biggest so far and that the ants seem to be developing signs of intelligence. They have strategies for attack and seem to be prepared for the methods Thorax have used in the past. Lennart calls in an old girlfriend entomologist Claire Dubois who has a theory about ant intelligence which has been ridiculed by the scientific community but now it seems rather pertinent. But what is the catalyst for the massive increase in their intelligence, is the formula Lennart using really benign or is there something else manipulating the ants.

The Hive is an intriguing and entertaining tale; it has some fascinating ideas and lots of "ant huntin" action scenes. It is fair to say some of the ways the ants develop including creating an artificial ant computer and a giant ant from millions of worker ants stretches credibility to breaking point. The ending which includes a flying saucer seems to come out of the blue without much justification.

However, that is what Science Fiction is for, to explore new territories, and for all its limitations in terms of CGI and obscure plot turns, it is loads of fun. In many ways it is one of those films which is so damn bad that it ends up being rather good.

Mega Shark Versus Giant Octopus The Asylum All Region NTSC

The Asylum produces B grade titles which have similar themes to current or major releases. In 2009 thus far we have had The Terminators and Transmorphers 2 among others, for example. This one, however, is out of left field and looks like it has been influenced by international creature horror films such as The Host.



It is a truly bizarre animal spectacular about a shark and an octopus causing havoc around the globe and then going toe to toe against each other. But these are not normal size animals, not even big animals, they are super-doooper, mega size monsters – Japanese Godzilla size to be precise !

The story opens with lots of stock footage and very average CGI (which continues throughout). We have an underwater vessel exploring the great beauty of nature at some depth under the ice. It is piloted by a rather sexy young lady with very long fingernails, not what I would expect as undersea pilot, but what the hell.

Soon an illegal sonar charge is dumped into the

Mega Shark is very Hungry



water by naughty military folk and a large pod of whales are killing themselves by smashing into the iceshelf.

This obviously has some consequences, some more obvious (and believable) than others. First the helicopter that dropped the charges crashes, poetic justice you may say. While the exploration vessel hits major turbulence and sustains damage the two members of the small crew survive. However, all is not well as our sexy whale lovin' underwater lady sees something she cannot believe.

Did she see a giant shark and octopus frozen in the ice and set free by the disaster or was she smoking weed before the journey. I tend to believe the later, but no, monstrous creatures ARE on the loose.

Soon these big beasties are attacking all and sundry, one of the better shots is when the shark jumps out of the water and takes a chunk out of the plane ! The reaction of one of the passengers is a rather downbeat "Shit" as the plane disintegrates. I think I would say a lot more if a giant, monstrous shark jumped out of the ocean and bit my plane in two ! There are lots more BIG scenes too including the octopus wiping out a petroleum rig and the shark attacking a bridge teeth first...

This is truly rip-roaring laughable entertainment, packed with stock footage of meaningful underwater scenes, new age music, terrible CGI, shocking acting and more. It stars Deborah Gibson, the old Eighties teen star – ahh well, she must have needed the work.

It was originally called Mega Shark Versus Giant Squid but supposedly market research thought octopus were more scary than squid, figure that one out. Whatever the title it is so bad it will burn itself on your memory for quite some time...

There is so much silliness in this film that every moment is a laugh and a smile.

It is fun, stupid and is one of those films you simply cannot believe they got the go ahead to make. One of the best things is the superb movie poster !

Raptor
Roger Corman
Peacock Film
Flashback DVD
R4 DVD

Roger Corman is the maestro of cheese and **Raptor** serves up large dollops of B grade goodness. Made in 2001 this is a film which looks and sounds like it came from the Eighties or early Nineties and is so unbelievably bad you will laugh all the way through it.

This is Jurassic park on a very, very low budget with no CGI and with absolutely none of the intelligence.

The film opens as some young drunk teens race through the desert and pull up just before their 4 x 4 goes over the edge of a cliff. One gets out for a leak and before he knows what hit him, a baby dinosaur tears off his dick and climbs into the van tearing his friends apart.

The camera pans to the blood splattered sticker on the tailgate of the car and the titles begin to roll. We begin to suspect what we are in for...

Sheriff Jim Tanner and wild animal expert Barbara are called in to investigate the killings and find large animal tracks and hear a roar in the background. What is that terrible sound they wonder ?

Dr.Hyde
Why is he wearing that stupid beret ?



Within a short time the body count begins to increase and even with a red herring about an escaped criminal, we know dinos are the culprits. So much for any suspense...

Of course there are some "filler" subplots including Tanner's daughter and her shock coma and his love interest with Barbara. But to be honest these just seem to be used to pack the story to keep the special effects budget as low as possible.

Soon Tanner learns about the Eunice Corporation where Dr. Hyde is ensconced doing animal experiments. They visit and conveniently hear loud "dinosaur like" noises and after doing some "internet research" learn Dr.Hyde majored in dinosaur genetics. It seems some years before he was employed for a government funded operation called "The Jurassic Storm Project" which was cloning Tyrannosaurus Rexs. The project was disbanded but he decided to carry on working on his project in clandestine labs. Somehow he kept below the governments radar by telling them he was working on the Human Genome Project. They never checked on him, of course ! Even though he knew how to clone dinosaurs !!

Now Hyde is working for the private sector and selling his dinosaur clones to the highest bidder. However, some are now loose and six people are dead and something must be done. Dr. Hyde is the iconic mad scientist and the other characters are pretty two dimensional too.

The military don't want their name connected to the rampaging dinos when the story hits the media and so send in the secret Delta team to deal with the dinos and Dr. Hyde. However when the power gets turned off, the Rexs get loose and are ready for a showdown.

This is truly appalling cinema. The dinosaurs are ridiculously bad and the acting atrocious. The finale when a toy Tonka truck battles a model dinosaur has to be seen to be believed. Corman had packed the film with long shots of corridors, extraneous plot and things blowing up so he can limit how many dinosaur shots he needs to show.

This is truly a silly movie which is so utterly pitiful you will scream with laughter from the very moment it opens until the stupendously silly ending...

Sasquatch
Canada
Sony Home Pictures Entertainment
Magna Pacific

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

Sasquatch was directed by Jonas Quastel and produced by Craig Denton and Rob Clark.

“Based On Actual Events”?

What of?

A night camping in the woods?

Somehow, I doubt that the “actual events” involved this story.

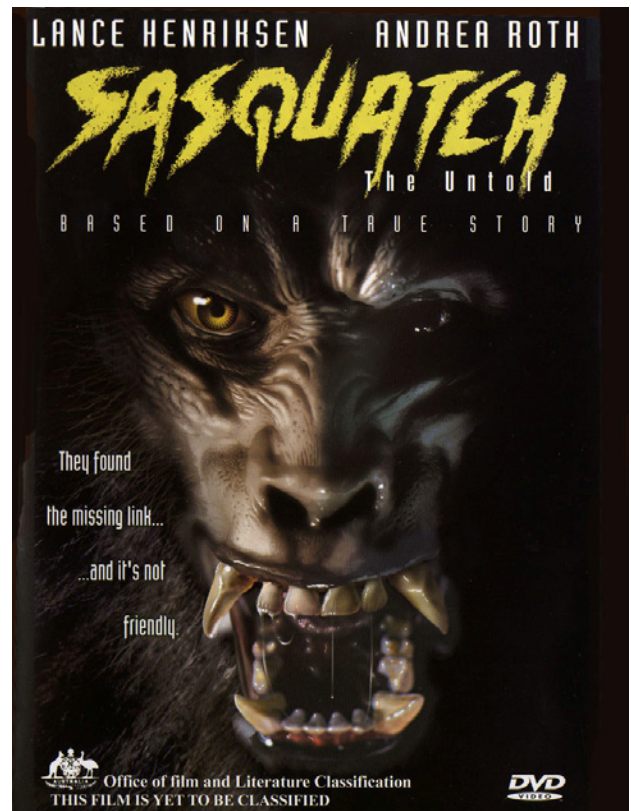
A plane owned by the Bio-Comp corporation has crashed in the mountains, with no survivors. The search has been called off. Harlan Knowles (Lance Henrikson), President of Bio-Comp Industries whose daughter has died in the crash, refuses to give up. There are rumours of a lost piece of valuable equipment on the plane. He organizes another search party to go into the forest.

There is something else in the forest – a creature is hunting them. Sasquatch, Bigfoot, Abominable Snowman, Yowie – it is known under a lot of names around the world. There are legends of the creatures breeding with human women. The search party realize they are being stalked when one of the party is attacked and dragged from her tent. She didn't see what attacked her, so they believe it could be a bear. Later a dead bear is found - with its head bashed in with a very heavy rock.

In a cave they find evidence that could mean a survivor from the crash. Strangely, when they continue on to the crash site there is no plane. There are fragments, and massive scratches on the trees to prove this is the site, but otherwise no plane. The wreck is found some miles away, and in it are pieces of human bodies – chewed.

There are also bloodstains on the wing of the plane – did it hit someone or something in the crash? Knowles reveals he is also looking for a prototype machine that his company was making. It can provide genetic and medical information from blood samples and will be invaluable for diagnosing and fighting diseases. It will be worth a fortune to the struggling BioComp.

The party is becoming spooked by the sounds the creature is making in the forest. Then a party member is taken.



The creature has taken a hit from the wild gunfire, and the guide follows the blood back to a cave where a number of bodies are stashed. One of them is Knowles' daughter.

The others leave, to try to get back to civilization, but Knowles stays to seek revenge for his daughter. In the end, it is just him and the Sasquatch.

The film was shot in something like twelve days, so it is a remarkably good effort for that sort of pressure. It was originally to be called The Untold, and the name change to Sasquatch came as a surprise to all concerned.

The story is not great, having too many stereotypes, but is generally well-filmed and well acted for its genre. At least the film doesn't go overboard with splatter. The Sasquatch-eye-view is blurry and rather fake-looking.

Henrikson particularly shows up well in his role, and his acting just about saves the film from becoming pure rubbish.

For most of the story the Sasquatch is just seen briefly as a shaggy figure in the undergrowth, but its final appearance is not disappointing. As a suspense creature feature, this one is not great but is at least OK.

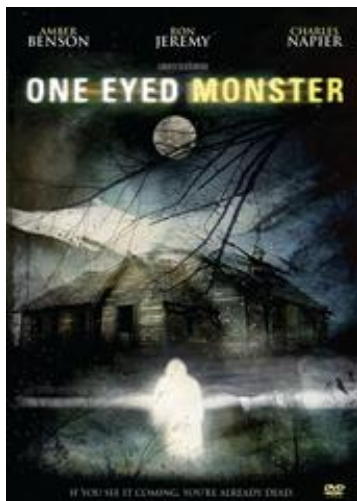
One Eyed Monster!

**R1 DVD
Liberation
Entertainment**

We have seen lots of strange creatures through our exploration of the "Creature Feature" genre but the fiend in this film is a true beauty. Yes, boys and girls, in the words of Bazza McKenzie it is "the one eyed trouser snake" and not any old appendage, but the well worn 9 ¾ inch love monster of Ron Jeremy, star of way too many porn films to list.

Jeremy is matched with Veronica Hart, another porn star veteran as well as adult cinema actress Carmen Hart. It is also amusing to note

Ron Jeremy gets invaded by a dick possessing alien. It is amazing how he can be the star of a film but actually only be in the first 15 minutes! The rest is completed by his "personal best friend".



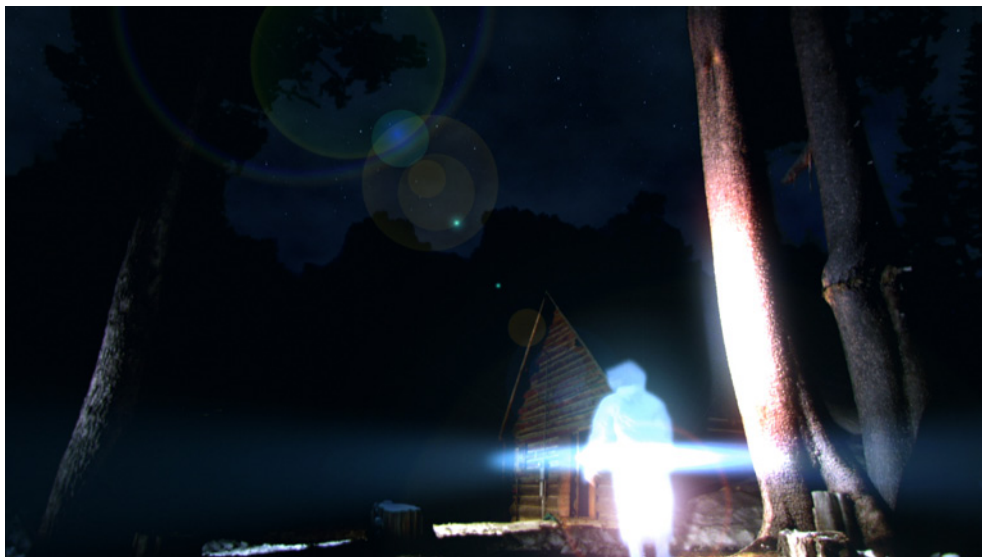
Adult Movie Veteran Veronica Hart

that Charles Napier who plays Mohtz, the Vietnam vet, originally appeared in early Russ Meyer booty films such as Supervixens. The other more "mainstream" actors and actresses also do a superb job and the film is marked by excellent performances all round.

Together they create a hilarious send up of porn films, the adult movie industry, horror movies and of course monster films. There are references to every possible creature film from Aliens to Jaws, Tremors to The Thing.

A small team set out to a snow topped mountain location to make a "fuck" film. This is how Jeremy sees it, he bemoans the days when porn films had plots, the stars were respected and he could suck his own penis. But alas there are bills to play and he drags his sorry arse to another straight to DVD shoot to make some bucks.

The team are comprised of a young porn film director making his





Alien possessed dick on the loose...

first film and who has little consideration for anyone but himself. A couple of old hands (Jeremy and Hart) and some young stars including a couple of “hung” young gentlemen and, of course, cute frivolous girls. The girls spend quite some time limbering up and learning their, umm, lines...

As they arrive the satire begins in earnest as first time director Adam Fields allows Jeremy to ridicule the pretensions of the modern adult film industry, the triviality of youth and a lot else besides. The plot is superbly laced with puns, double-entendre and witty dialogue. It is especially effective as clearly Jeremy knows the porn industry from the inside out and is able to ridicule its pretensions, and indeed himself, in a uniquely amusing yet at times honest and self deprecating manner.

Caleb screams after an especially painful invasion !



Jeremy finds himself unable to perform in the first scene with Hart. Who incidentally has nudged her way into the film by showing what she can do with her vaginal muscles, proving that experience is far more valuable than youth.

As he relaxes outside a light from the night sky knocks him off his feet. When he returns to the set he performs way beyond his usual standard, has a seizure and then dies. There is one problem, however, his penis is

missing! When they check the footage they are able to clearly see that his penis literally detached itself and slithered away !

It seems his penis has been “possessed” by an alien who wishes to impregnate as many orifices as possible and is now rampaging through the crew. It does not seem to be an especially choosy appendage and all manner of mayhem occurs as it penetrates everything it comes across. Even a panty trap cannot control it.

There are some extra-ordinarily funny and perverse scenes in One Eyed Monster from the ultimate “head job” where the penis literally burrows through Angel’s head to the scene in which the dick talks through T.J’s arsehole. One of the most outrageous “serious” scenes is where Mohtz, the Vet, describes how one of these aliens landed in Vietnam and anally raped and killed his whole platoon – truly unbelievable !

Along the way we are treated to sub plots about Vietnam, a neuro sex simulator and more. The climax is suitably explosive.

The balance of comedy, horror and sex humour is immensely successful. Jeremy is an absolute gem, even though he is killed off early and his penis becomes the star of the show. While the film is clearly a comedy, it also offers a damn good dose of suspense and horror and the killer prosthetic is a joy to behold.

This is truly the ultimate “*creature-feature*”.

Web: <http://www.libent.com/>

The Retro Visions of Christopher Mihm

Christopher R Mihm Biography and Background

Christopher H Mihm's filmmaking career began in 2005 with his first film **"The Monster of Phantom Lake."** However, to really appreciate the raison d'être behind Mihm's films you must first come to appreciate his late father George Mihm. His father would tell great stories of spending cold, small-town Minnesota winters in the relative warmth of his local movie house, taking in double features of trashy, B-grade science fiction and horror flicks.

For a quarter he'd see double bills with such classics as **"Village of the Damned"** ("The eyes..." he'd tell Mihm.) and **"Them!"** ("Giant ants!" he would exclaim.)

When Christopher was a kid, his dad would rent these movies over and over again. They would frequently watch them together although, at the time, Christopher could never quite figure out just what it was his dad saw in this low-grade and hardly frightening genre of cinema.

At age 51, in the year 2000, his father died of stomach cancer. Since then Christopher has revisited many of these old movies and realized, they're just not the same without him.

Fellow producer and actor Josh Craig and Christopher had been friends for many years. And regularly discussed making their own movie. Seeing those old movies again and enjoying their often poorly written dialogue, barely passable camera work and marginal special effects, an idea arose. In Christopher's own word's "What would happen if Josh and I stopped talking about it and actually made a movie? And not just ANY movie but THIS kind



Christopher Mihm with Josh "Jackson"

of movie, one that a ten year old version of my dad would approve of?"

That thought soon took over and the obsession began. Before they knew what hit them **"The Monster of Phantom Lake"** was born and they were holding auditions and then amazingly, shooting a movie !

The film was finally released in March 2006 to highly receptive crowds and has since played at numerous film festivals. An award-winning sequel, **"It Came From Another World!"**, followed in May 2007 and a third, **"Cave Women on Mars"** in April 2008.

A fourth film, **"Terror from Beneath the Earth"** will premiere on May 20th, 2009.

The Monster of Phantom Lake
Written & Directed by Christopher R Mihm
B&W
Saint Euphoria Studios
Web: <http://www.sainteuphoria.com>

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

This film promises us *"Unbridled Terror, Unquenchable Romance, Unbelievable Science, and the Unstoppable Power of the Rock and Roll"*. Christopher Mihm offers us another take-off of those dreadful 1950s horror films that graced many a late night session at the drive-in.

Professor Jackson and his assistant are camping near Phantom Lake, ready to engage in some research. I was a bit concerned when Professor Jackson suggests that his young female graduate assistant, Miss Yates, should "get it from the rear", but apparently he is referring to their camping gear in the back of the car. At the same time a group of young people are camped nearby, and one tells the story of the old war veteran who lives in the area. He killed his wife and is now completely crazy, roaming the woods and muttering about "the Germans". We add to this mix some workers from a local factory who are dumping atomic waste into the lake, and we are ready to begin the slaughter.

"I was only fooling, Miss Yates. You do like to fool around, don't you?"

In the morning the Professor and Miss Yates start to "do a little science", and test the water of the lake. A strange growth catches their attention, and they are about to run it through the Evolutatronic Spectronaliser when the Professor spots an eight-legged frog. Is it the next step in amphibian evolution or ... something far more

Phantom Lake Monster Attacks



.... insidious? Yes, Professor Jackson does talk like ... that. The algae is also giving strange results so they take it back to their camp for closer examination. The youngsters, meanwhile, have gone for a hike in the woods and managed to get lost. They have also seen a strange large four-fingered pawprint high on a tree. While trying to find their way back to their camp they run across the Professor and Miss Yates.

The boys take the Professor back into the woods to examine the pawprint, and on their way back they discover an empty canoe that was used by the local Canoe Cops, and then find the veteran's camp. It has been thoroughly trashed. Meanwhile Miss Yates has analysed the algae and found that it is a partly human hybrid.

That evening another load of atomic waste goes into the lake, and the two men dumping it are pulled into the lake as well. And that night, the world's fakiest -looking monster comes out of the lake - to feed? "The unspeakable horror that menaced the fate of the human race ! " Only one person can save humanity.

"Will self-proclaimed "scared of everything" teenager Elizabeth confront her worst fears?"

How many more will die? Will they die laughing? The film has all the essential ingredients, right down to the cheesy "Holiday For Strings" - type music as the teenagers frolic through the woods, and the brassy ominous tracks as the monster stands there with its arms outstretched reaching for ...???

The film is accurate though subtle in its comedy, but it's obviously a labour of love from someone who has spent far too much time watching the old movies. I commend it to you.

The DVD includes the usual deleted scene, bloopers, and commentary.



It Came from Another World
Written and Directed by Christopher W Mihm
Produced by Christopher W Mihm and Josh Craig
Saint Euphoria Studios
Web: <http://www.sainteuphoria.com>

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

Excitement ! Suspense ! Canoes !

There's been an event ! Something has caused an earthquake in an area that is otherwise geologically stable, and a previously unknown radiation has been detected. A scientist, Professor Jackson, is sent to investigate, with a couple of local guides, the Canoe Cops.

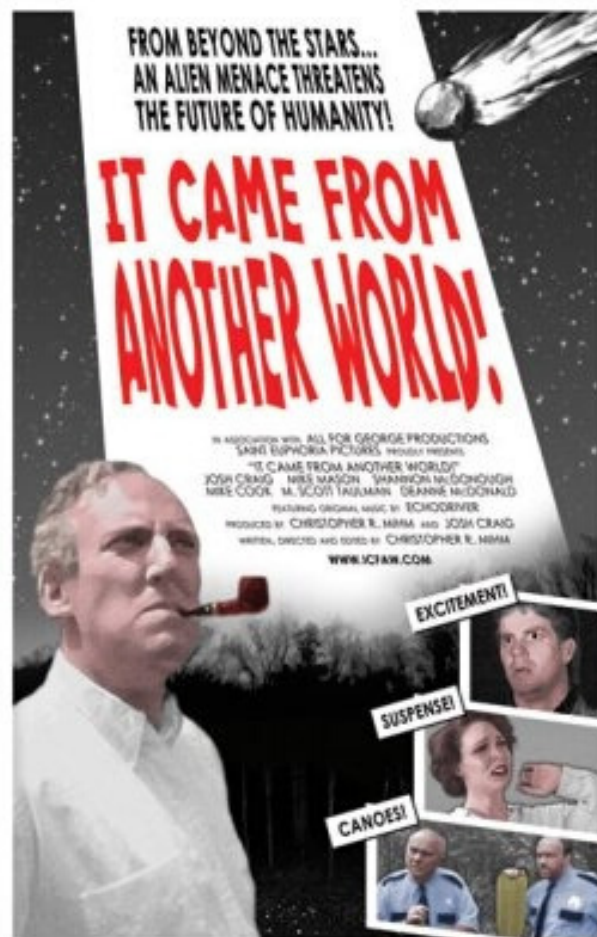
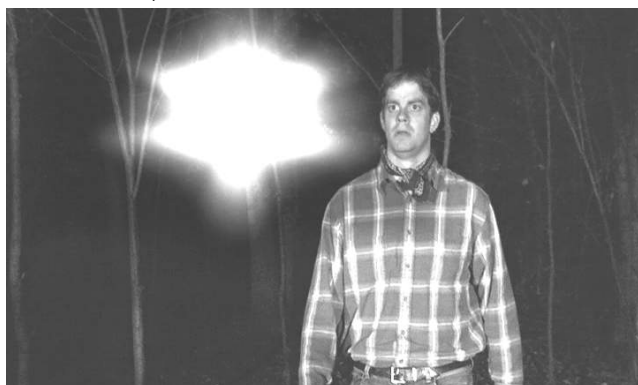
"There's no motorised access so we'll be forced to go in by ... canoe !"

A Dr Frasier has been missing for two weeks in the area where the meteorite crashed. A strange ball of light from the meteorite has taken over his mind. His friend the Professor and the guides find him, and he is taken back to his campsite to recover. Meanwhile the Professor examines the meteorite (with an aircraft artificial horizon ???) and decides that it is from another universe (Shock! Horror! Ominous music!)

Despite appearing outwardly normal, Dr Frasier's sleep is broken by nightmares of death and destruction as the alien inside his mind starts to make its presence felt. His behaviour starts to change, and he (gasp!) sleeps with a woman. He also develops a craving for coffee, and bug eyes.

With the help of a Subatomic Demoleculator, the Professor finds nothing wrong with him. In spite of this, the alien succeeds in taking over Doctor Frasier – "You, puny Earthling, are now my vessel". It announces that the Doctor will find a suitable female vessel for the essence of its Queen, who is currently a fine powder locked in the me-

Yes, it came from another world !



eteorite (lots more dramatic music). It has determined that the most suitable vessel is the Professor's fiancée.

The Professor, naturally, objects, but the alien overpowers him. *"There is only I, Ruler of all Cosmos.... don't worry, Earthling – I'm not going to kill you, not yet. Not before you've had the pleasure of watching your world crushed beneath my iron fist of righteousness!"*

Can the Professor break the alien's evil hold? Can he save the world and make it safe for canoes?

The film is a wonderful romp all over the rather crude SF films of the 1950s. The 1950s feeling is perfectly done, complete with cheesy music, fake-looking props, corny dialog and slightly-too-long laughter. And, of course, a heroine who knows her place – cooking, cleaning, and looking attractive for her fiancée. The "science" is as dodgy as it can get, part of the charm of the film. Top marks to all concerned for a great film.

Technically the film is high quality – sharp and clear, a lovely black and white period look, and good quality sound. Extras include a bloopers reel, deleted scenes, and one minute and twenty seconds of malfunctioning eyeballs.

Cave Women on Mars

B&W

Written & directed by Christopher R Mihm

Produced by Christopher Mihm and Josh Craig

Saint Euphoria DVD

Web: <http://www.sainteuphoria.com>

Web: <http://www.cavewomenonmars.com>

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

Primitive Martian Beauties ! Rampaging Alien Beasties ! Out Of This World Romance! Wonders Never Before Seen on the Silver Screen !

This film is a takeoff of those early SF movies – fake-looking low-budget sets, dreadful script, bad acting and all. It is set in the future – 1987 – but the black and white photography and general styling of the props sets the film firmly in the 1950s and its tongue firmly in cheek. To call the film a budget production is to be kind. With a total cast of nine and only a couple of indoor sets, you get what you would expect. What you also get but do not expect is a pretty good spoof.

The first Earth spaceship to Mars has just landed. It appears to be made of wallboard sheet, complete with jointing strips and square corners. Mars turns out to be earthlike, and is inhabited by two tribes of warring native women, the Liak and the Zil. They speak English and dominate the planet and the men. They do not,

Cave Women on Mars—the title says it all !



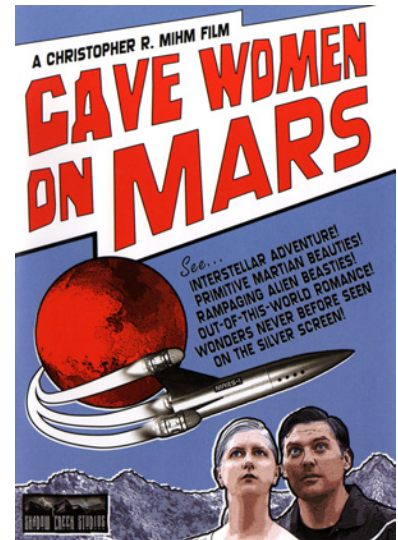
however, dominate many dressmakers as their clothing is fairly minimal. They are amazingly well groomed and made up for young ladies who live rough in the forest (no, not in caves).

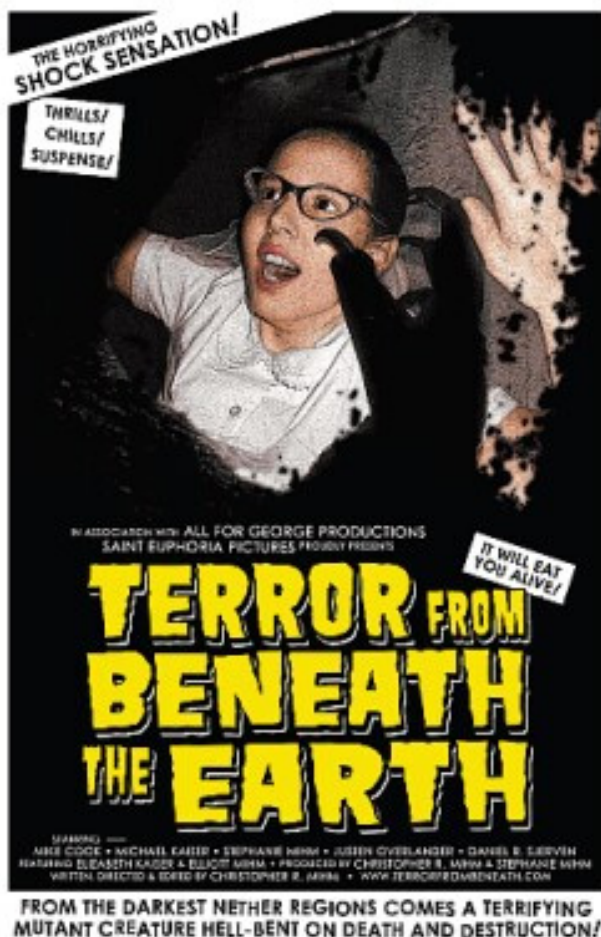
The forest is inhabited by monsters (as usual in this sort of film, men in furry monster suits) (well, one, anyway – it IS a budget film)). One of the two-man crew, Lieutenant Elliott, is captured by Eina, the leading warrior of the Zil. They begin to fall in love. The tribe's wise woman tells the Lieutenant of a prophecy that the two warring tribes can be united only if a man and woman can fall in love, and show the women that their men are more than pets.

Unfortunately he is then captured by the cruel Liak, but is saved by the Captain. He decides he will stay on Mars with Eina. Eina and the Liak warrior then engage in the slowest staff-fight ever. Eina wins. Will love now triumph? Will the tribes join and find peace? Will it never end?

The blooper reel is in many ways even funnier than the film. The actors and crew had a lot of trouble keeping a straight face. This is hardly surprising, considering that they are amateurs, and given the quality of the script. It is so typical of the 50s films. It is not helped by aircraft flying over, bugs, ducks, and fits of the giggles. The Special Features demonstrate the problems caused by bad rear projection and keeping the damn parking lot out of shot. A deleted scene is possibly better than the one used in the film and explains how the two tribes developed separately. If I have one real criticism it's that the dialogue could have been hammed up a little more. Otherwise the film is good fun.

It is not truly dreadful like Plan 9 From Outer Space, but I must give it points for trying sometimes. It can be surprisingly hard to make a good spoof that doesn't just look silly, but this one succeeds.





Terror from Beneath the Earth

B&W

Written, edited, directed by Christopher Mihm

Saint Euphoria

Web: <http://www.sainteuphoria.com>

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

Yes, he's at it again. Christopher Mihm gives us another wonderful takeoff of the 1950s sci-fi movies. Once again we have the unlikely plot, the even more unlikely monster, and the cheesy 50s music. *"From the darkest nether regions comes a terrifying mutant creature hell bent on death and destruction".*

Atomic testing has been carried out in the Wisawa cave system, but has been stopped by the Supreme Court as it is a sacred site to the Native Americans. The testing wasn't stopped soon enough, however, and in one bat-infested cave the radiation has spawned a deadly human-sized mutant bat creature. Two kids have wandered into the caves and been taken by the creature. Coincidentally a scientist and his niece are also investigating the caves and they find the little girl's school-



Attack ! Attack !

books. They report this to the Sheriff who arranges a search of the cave. The kids' father and the Professor's niece are also taken.

Professor Jackson (yes, our slow-spokenhero.... from earlierfilms) sends them a Sonic Amplitude Oscillator which can generate sound waves that can attract and even kill the creature. Will this unhappy and unique creature, created by man's excesses and war-like nature, be cruelly and wantonly destroyed? Of course it will. We wouldn't have it any other way.

Carol Eade, Stephanie Mihm and Shannon McDonough must, I assume, accept the responsibility for the hilariously fake creature with its cardboard ears. I don't know who to blame for the scenery which looks like and almost certainly is someone's house wrapped up in canvas, complete with the door arches. A budget production? Undoubtedly, and all the better for not trying too hard to hide it. It's just fake-looking enough to work perfectly. If there is a negative point in the whole film, it's that I missed the earnest Professor Jackson and his speech problem..

I am truly scared now...





It is hard to talk about retro creature movies without coming across Godzilla. Far from being retro, though, the last Godzilla film was in 1998 and there is a proposal to produce another on Godzilla's 60th anniversary in 2013. How did a creature come to achieve such fame?

After World War 2, a damaged Japan was coming to grips with the massive reconstruction needed. Its population was demoralized by its defeat, and particularly they were realizing the long-lasting effects of the two atomic bombs dropped on their country. Nuclear paranoia was strong in the population. They needed a hero, or at least something to repair their damaged morale.

Traditionally monsters have appeared from man's attempts to become more godlike, as a result of those attempts going horribly wrong. Godzilla was no exception. In the 1953 or 1954 film (overdubbed into English in 1956) he rose



from the sea after being disturbed or mutated by atomic bomb testing and proceeded, as monsters do, to attack Japan.

His body was radioactive and he was armed with an "atomic ray" which could instantly set fire to or vaporize people and buildings. Godzilla has been seen in this respect to be an allegory of the United States to the Japanese people. Defeating Godzilla would somehow salvage a bit of their national pride. It may be significant that in the early parts of the film the American journalist who carries the story is injured in the destruction caused by the radioactive monster – poetic justice perhaps?

The opening scenes do not mention Godzilla at all, but show grim scenes of hospitals and destruction that are strongly reminiscent of war-time.

In the end, with the Japanese military powerless to stop Godzilla, it is only the self-sacrifice of a young Japanese researcher that can save the country.

Godzilla was the brainchild of Toho Studios,

Bob Estreich



Toho Kabushiki-kaisha. Its specialty was monster (daikaiju) films and special effects (tokusatsu). Toho had been involved in theatre and films in Japan since 1932 and knew its job well. Godzilla was supposedly the nickname of one of the stage hands, who was of quite large stature. Godzilla is an anglicisation of the original Japanese "Gojira". Considering the film was made fifty years ago in black and white and without CGI, the special effects and models are impressive. Despite its age, the film is still worth viewing. It is readily available in cheap compilations of monster movies at discount shops. I got mine for \$5, and at that price it is great value.

The film and its following ones were more successful than Toho could have possibly imagined. They produced 28 Godzilla films, plus cartoon and anime series. They distributed the Gamera films (another monster, who in due course came to fight Godzilla) as well as Mothra, King Gidorah, MechaGodzilla, and Rodan. Godzilla lined up against all of these eventually.

They also produced Akira Kurosawa's films (**Seven Samurai** etc), and more recently the tremendous anime range from Studio Ghibli. They even distributed the **Pokemon** anime movies (as far as I know Godzilla has not yet fought the Pokemon) and to an entertainment-starved population Toho became something of a hero themselves. They even opened a theatre in San Francisco and cracked the lucrative U.S. market, and were at least partly responsible for the wave of dreadful U.S. creature films that followed.

The 1953 Godzilla / Gojira was followed in 1955 by **Godzilla Raids Again**. Toho was completely shameless. In 1962 they released the monster exploitation **King Kong vs Godzilla**, and realized they were onto something. **Godzilla vs the Sea Monster** appeared in 1966 and from then on Godzilla managed to fight anything more than a few metres tall.

The late 1960s and the early 1970s were good years for Godzilla, but something odd happened along the way. Godzilla gradually changed from becoming Japan's worst enemy to becoming the country's defender when it was attacked by other monsters.

An example is the 1974 **Terror of MechaGodzilla**. The enemy was now becoming a hero. In a more confusing move, in 1967 **Son of Godzilla** was released. This cast some doubts on Godzilla's sex. At best, he was a she, at worst there were more Godzillas around.

Public tastes were becoming a little jaded with monsters, but Godzilla was revived in 1984 with **The Return of Godzilla**. It did rather well for Toho, so in 1989 **Godzilla vs Biollante** was released.



This was an interesting update of the Godzilla idea. In keeping with changing politics, the enemy was now a huge U.S. bio-genetics company. They had been picking through the rubble from Godzilla's last rampage looking for a sample of his genetic material.

A Japanese researcher is developing an anti-radioactive bacteria that could be used against Godzilla, but could also have highly profitable uses against cancer.

He has combined this DNA into a new flower based on a rose, but has also included some DNA from his dead daughter as a memorial to her. Godzilla is accidentally released and only the flower, Biollante, can combat him.

Godzilla 2000: Millennium was released in 1999. It could be just as easily called Godzilla meets the Aliens. They are after his DNA so they can reproduce themselves in his bodily form, since it is almost unbeatable. This will allow the aliens to take over Earth.



A further five films were issued in the 2000s, culminating in 2004 in **Godzilla: Final Wars**. In this film Earth is under attack once more by aliens, who have released ten of the traditional monsters simultaneously to terrorize earth's cities. Godzilla must be awakened from his prison under the Antarctic ice shelf to once again save earth. In this film we also meet Godzilla's son, a rather sickeningly cute little dinosaur. He was copied in other countries (have a look at Barney in the U.S. or Dorothy in Australia).



Cutesy Godzilla



In spite of this, the film was arguably the best Godzilla ever. The effects are spectacular, the creatures are brilliantly animated, and once again the concept of self-sacrifice to save the world is brought up.

Meanwhile the monster movie genre was alive and well in the United States. Tristar picked up the Godzilla franchise and remade the 1956 version. This time it reflected their changing political realities. It was the French atomic testing in the Pacific that caused the damage, and Godzilla attacked America instead of Japan. Once again the military was powerless to stop it. Scientific tests showed that Godzilla reproduced asexually, and was trying to feed its young. A nest was found in the New York subway tunnels and was destroyed, but only after terrible destruction. One egg survived.



Although this film is a good remake, it didn't impress me as much as the original or Final Wars. Perhaps this is because it tries to tie up too many loose ends in the original story, loses the plot somewhat, then falls back on the military to save the day. It has an overall glossy presentation that loses much of the raw terror of the earlier version. Somehow the 1956 plot was more convincing.

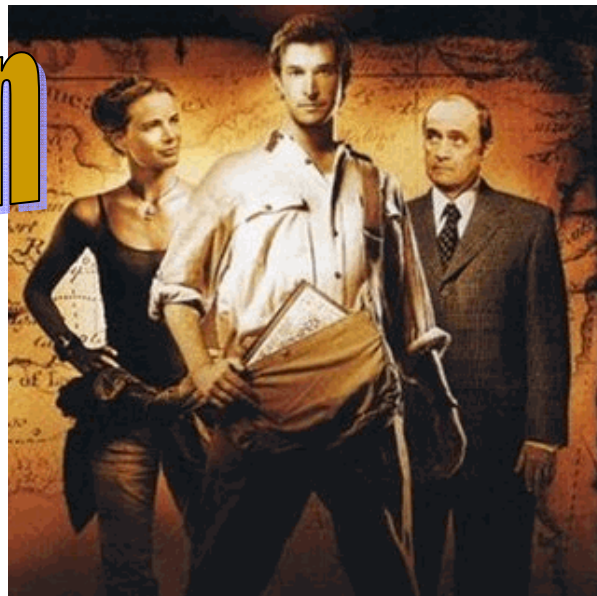
The element of self-sacrifice to save the world was poignant and heroic in the original, but unconvincing in the remake. Godzilla was revamped to make him / her / it more terrifying, to the point that Toho declared it to be a completely different monster. The film did not win many converts among the huge numbers of "real" Godzilla fans. That said, though, the effects are magnificent and it is still worth watching.

Many of the series of films are still available, and they are surprisingly cheap.

Why not round up a couple and see what it was all about?

The Librarian

The Librarian: Quest for the Spear
The Librarian: Return to King Solomon's Mines
The Librarian: The Quest for the Spear
R4 DVD
Blu Ray
Beyond Home Entertainment



The Librarian is a cross between Indiana Jones, National Treasure and "boys own adventure" TV serials. It was made for cable TV but don't hold that against it. It knows its limitations and adjusts accordingly. It has been carefully scripted with a dry humorous style which applies not only to the dialogue, but to the arc of the story and the look of the film as well. The central character is Flynn, a nerd who has been in college way too long and when he is forced out into the world finds himself recruited to become "The Librarian".

The Librarian's job is to be the curator of a vast underground complex where the world's greatest treasures are stored, from UFO's to H.G. Wells' Time Machine, from Noah's Ark to the Ark of the Covenant, Pandora's Box to a strangely self aware Excalibur. It is controlled by Judson (who may or may not be its original 2000 year old founder) and his offsider and accountant Charlene.

The script of each film has been written to tie in as many adventure tale clichés as possible with constant references of all manner of myth, legend and history.

Anyone with a background in esoteric lore or even just history in general will giggle throughout as comments are made about everything from secret alien bases to the Gnostic gospels, occult lore to the Knights Templar.

The Librarian also has the feel of a strange James Bond adaptation. But here we have a gawky James Bond, a bookish 007 fighting against The Secret Brotherhood of the Serpent or other stereotypically enemies, all out to destroy the world.

In **The Librarian: Quest for the Spear**

we see how Flynn begins his journey. He has been a student way too long, he holds 22 degrees and yet has never been out in the world. His mother (played splendidly by Olympia Dukakis) keeps trying to get him out on a date to no avail, he is more occupied with ancient history and philosophy. When he is recruited to the ultra secret Library he finds he is not just a curator but a warrior against evil. On his first day the Library's security is breached, Judson is attacked and a shard of the Spear of Destiny is stolen.



The Spear, it seems, is not a myth but is a powerful relic imbued with supernatural power which was created when it pierced the side of Christ. It was broken into three pieces and hidden in three locations around the globe by an earlier librarian as it was found that whoever possessed the spear had the power to conquer the world. The locations have been recorded in a book written in the language of the birds.

There are all sorts of silly references to religion and occultism based on the myth of the spear but this just adds to the sheer giddy pleasure of the adventure. Flynn must decode the language of the birds, mankind's primal pre-Tower

of Babel speech and find the other two segments. This leads him to the heart of a hidden Mayan complex in the Amazon and into Shangri-La a hidden Tibetan city in the Himalayas.

Along the way he meets No one, his female sidekick who is the brawn to his brains and also provides a love interest to the tale. She also provides a link to the former Librarian, with whom she fell in love, who now has moved to the dark-side.

It seems that seduced by the thought of great power, the former Librarian (played with some panache by Kyle McLachlan) now heads the Secret Brotherhood of the Serpent which is after the power of the Spear.

The special effects and CGI are what would be expected from a relatively limited budget made for cable TV movie. While they do improve in later movies, they are always a bit on the cheesy side but this really suits this type of film anyway.

The effects are a bit like those found in the old Buck Rogers or Flash Gordon series, they are obviously not up to scratch but their sheer exuberance makes the film more of a romp ! At times it is as though they have been deliberately made to look artificial to emphasize the playfulness of the storyline. For example, the very obviously clichéd look of the Mayan temple or the Tibetan Shangri-La simply confirm the "boy's own adventure" feel of the tale.

The Librarian really is a very fun parody of all the adventure tales you have ever seen and knows how to keep you amused, entertained and thrilled throughout.

The Librarian: Return to King Solomon's

The Nerd gets the girl this time !



Mines is the next in the series and again is a rather fun romp through ancient myths and legends. It is directed by Jonathan Frakes who has brought his "Star Trek" experience to create a very memorable and action packed adventure.



It has a lot more CGI than the first and again is packed with bizarre coincidences, great conspiracies and every historical reference they can pack in.

The tale centres around Flynn's past: his father was an adventurer and dreamer and was killed when Flynn was young. All Flynn remembers are the bedtime stories about strange and wonderful adventures, indeed it was these tales which led Flynn to his obsession with academic studies. The story progresses with a stolen scroll leading Flynn to realize he is on the track to King Solomon's mines where the ancient Book of Solomon is hidden. It seems that this magical tome allows its owner to wield power over time and space and it is up to Flynn and his team to get it back before the world is irreparably damaged.

By the time we reach the third film "**The Librarian: Curse of the Judas Chalice**" Flynn is a bit burnt out. He has protected the world from thirty five forms of evil in way too many missions and his love life has hit a wall. He is ordered to take some time off but has no idea what he will do with himself since he lives for the challenge of his work.

He spends this unexpected leisure time relaxing at home, reading, exploring card games and generally vegging out in a way only a nerdy Librarian can. Then things change, he wakes up having had a rather erotically charged dream of a woman in New Orleans.

Then finds a brochure on his coffee table describing New Orleans holidays left for him by Charlene. He takes these events as an omen and off he goes on vacation.



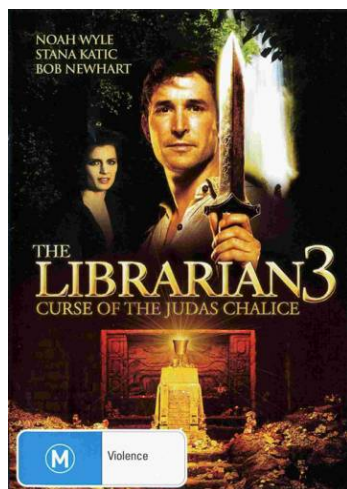
Now, that's a library !

Of course, nothing is ever as easy as it seems for Flynn, especially when it comes to love.

He soon finds that his dream lover is a 400 year old vampire who is guarding a medallion which encodes the location of the Judas Chalice. She, however, is a "nice" vampire who does not bite or tear out the throats of her victim, but lives off frozen blood packs she keeps carefully stored in her fridge.

Hot on their trail is the ex head of the KGB who believes Russia has fallen to anarchism and chaos and hence is after the Chalice too. His aim is to resurrect Dracula (Vlad the Impaler) to bring about the restoration of Russian aristocracy once and for all. Of course, he will be the head of the military and with an army of dead warriors work beside Vlad to conquer the world !

So in the third of the series the storyline has moved up a notch adding vampires and shape changers to the mix. Using New Orleans as a backdrop was an inspired choice allowing all sorts of Gothic and "Anne Rice" like dark imagery to be added into the story. This mix of the gothic and the mythic makes it a very enjoyable



Jonathan Frakes has once again done a great job on a limited budget and the CGI is a step above that found in the first two films. One thing that I especially enjoyed with **The Curse of the Judas Chalice** was the great music.

Jonathan Frakes loves Blues and Jazz and it shows in this film. It is packed with great sounds from Blues and Jazz tracks to Seventies riffs, this special focus on the score of the film adds an extra texture not often found in a made for TV productions.

If these films sound totally B grade and a bit superficial, well, yes they are. But that is what they are made for – light adventure entertainment with a thrill a minute. For what they are they work exceptionally well.

They are clearly made for television. In many ways the intelligent use of the budgetary limitations of the CGI has made innovation the word of the day and they prove very effective.

The strong character development adds to the humour of the films which is matched by very witty and amusing plots brimming with fast paced dialogue. These are true "retro" pleasures, exploring the world of conspiracies and hidden agendas with lots of classic adventure tale motifs told with tongue in cheek glee.

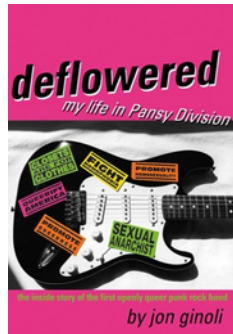
The Librarian films have been released by Beyond Entertainment in DVD and Blu Ray formats.

BOOKS & COMICS



Deflowered:
My Life in Pansy Division
Jon Ginoli
Cleiss Press 2009

"Few bands outside the mainstream ever write songs so striking that listeners will rush out and buy them on first hearing, but I think Pansy Division is one such band.



To this day, their back catalogue remains hugely liberating for any gay music fan who's grown up immersed in the het pop, macho rap, and metal posturing of Western youth culture. The songs are also tremendous fun. Their riotous celebration of male-on-male sexuality remains a unique achievement in pop music history."

Tom Robinson
BBC Radio

"We're the buttfuckers of rock-and-roll, We want to sock it to your hole!" With these words written in a notebook, Jon Ginoli began his journey of self-discovery, musical passion, and obsession to become the founding member of Pansy Division.



Jon Ginoli

sion, the first out and proud queercore punk rock band to hit the big time. (Well, near big-time!)

Ginoli founded Pansy Division in early-Nineties San Francisco to confront typical gay stereotypes about music. The punk and later punk-pop band—which consisted of all openly gay members—released its first album in 1993 on Lookout Records, and by 1994 had mainstream success with second album "Deflowered." The group opened for Green Day on the "Dookie" tour and helped spearhead the Queercore movement. Indeed appearing with Green Day opening the way to present their music before a MTV-watching, at least for a short moment of time. Pansy's Divisions style is in your face, no holds barred and laced with humour as well down and dirty lyrics.

It was not all easy sailing, with the band having to deal with homophobic fans, the uphill battle to gain acceptance within the rock industry and of course, all the personality clashes, label battles and sex, drugs and groupies along the way !

Somehow Jon Ginoli captures the essence of his journey in this tell all book which not only reflects on the life of Pansy Division but on his own artistic experience. Of course, it is replete with the requisite tales of sex and drugs and good times but at the same time it is more than just a series of "wild(e) episodes" focusing on the authenticity of Pansy Division and the vision they had of themselves and their music.

Pansy Division has just recently released a new album "That's So Gay," their first after six years and is the subject of a full length documentary "Pansy Division: Life in a Gay Rock Band".



Web: <http://www.cleisspress.com>

The Devil Made Me Do It
A memoir by Georgina
Spelvin
Erotic Icon of the
Seventies
Self Published

Georgina Spelvin, star of the iconic film, *The Devil in Miss Jones* has written her memoir. The poignant, funny and extremely bawdy romp of around 300 pages proffers vivid anecdotes from the time surrounding the making of this classic film and her life in general.

From the itinerant oil fields of East Texas of her ballet-dancing childhood, Spelvin takes us to the glamour of New York's legendary Latin Quarter tapping the boards as a diminutive chorine replete with top-heavy feathered headdress; through to obtaining the lead role in Broadway's *Pajama Game* that launched Shirley MacLaine's career.

Her dancing stint led to producing multi-media for JC Penney and living in a commune in the Manhattan meat packing district with serious documentary filmmakers ready to change the world.

What is now film history followed. Needing to fund this co-op spawned Spelvin's infamous erotic performances. Her memoir reveals among many funny moments produced a very singular epiphany: the instant when she first realizes she is working in a hard-core porn film.

In hot water with Veronica Hart !



Then, sadly, she documents her problems with alcoholism and working in cheap strip joints.

The Devil Made Me Do It is a brutally honest book but not one filled with re-



Georgina & Quentin Crisp

criminations. It discusses with measured detachment the costs of the choices she made. It documents failed relationships, alcohol addiction and sexual confusion.

In the end she decided to leave that life behind but not with some conversion experience nor with condemning those she left behind - this book is no apology. Spelvin has never regretted the work she did, or falling into this strange yet erotically expanded world.

It was a world where her movie and her legacy became rather historic both in terms of cinema and politics. Indeed *The Devil in Miss Jones* became a model for many sexual rebels and mavericks.

Unlike so many porn stars, Spelvin has opted to write the book herself and hence it has a far more realistic turn of phrase than those produced by ghost-writers and written to a formula. Spelvin is a very skilled writer, creating a real page-turner that goes far beyond porn sets of the '70s and offering all sorts of reflections on life, sexuality and entertainment.

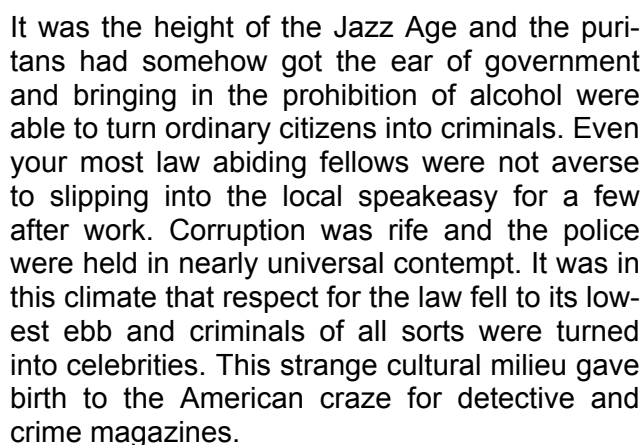
While blunt and straight to the point, it is also a book exploring love and relationships. It is a truly entertaining and exciting read and one you will not want to put down until the very last paragraph.

Spelvin is currently at work on the sequel, *Going Down in Flames*, due out later in 2009.

Georgina's World

<http://www.georginasworld.com>

True Crime Detective Magazines is a beautiful book which follows this distinctly American genre from 1924 to 1969. This period is known as the Golden Age of bad girls when gangsters were turned into heroes and bad girls were heroines.

[illegible]

robbers alike vied to see themselves on the pages. Even FBI boss J. Edgar Hoover wrote regularly for what came to be called the "Dickbooks," referring to a popular slang term for the police.



As time passed and prohibition ended, the magazines had to find a new angle to survive. This new angle was sex and sin, soon where criminals had once been pride of place years before you now saw girls in slinky skirts and high heels. The new covers shouted "I Was a Girl Burglar—For Kicks," "Sex Habits of Women Killers," "Bride of Sin!," "She Played Me for a Sucker," and most succinctly, "Bad Woman."

True Crime Detective Magazines is a superbly produced hardcover which follows the evolution and transformation of this uniquely American genre from 1924 to 1969. Hundreds of covers and interior images from dozens of magazine titles tell the story, not just of the "detectives," but also of America's attitudes towards sex, sin, crime and punishment over five decades. This is a book which will be just as fascinating to those interested in graphic design and art as to those seeking to understand the social history of the history.

At the same time it is also a documentation of one of the more bizarre publishing genres in magazine history and offers a fascinating insight into this sometimes overlooked field. With texts by magazine collector Eric Godtland, George Hagenaur and True Detective editor Marc Gerald, True Crime Detective Magazines is an informative and entertaining work and truly beautifully presented.

It is approx 340 pages, full colour, 9" x 11" and hard-cover. Of course it is produced to Taschen's always impressive high standards.

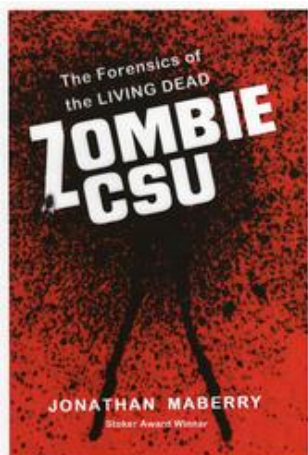
Zombie CSU
Jonathan Mayberry
Citadel Press 2008

In the tradition of bestsellers *World War Z* and *The Zombie Survival Guide*, multiple Bram Stoker Award-winner Jonathan Mayberry presents an irresistible, fully illustrated and fascinating guide to the forensic science of the walking dead.

Mayberry, however, takes a very different view than fictional explorations of the subjects he uses “Zombies” as a working hypothesis and interviews experts to see how the real world would respond to a Zombie attack.

Mayberry interviews 250 real-world experts in Law enforcement, Forensic Science, Medicine, Law, Psychology, the Military and Philosophy to present the first ever look at how our real world would react, research and respond to a zombie uprising.

Follow the case from the crime scene of the first zombie attack; collect evidence with the experts; go on a manhunt with the police; stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Swat; go into the labs and morgue with top scientists; hunt the story with journalists; kick some undead ass with martial arts experts; and philosophize with psycholo-



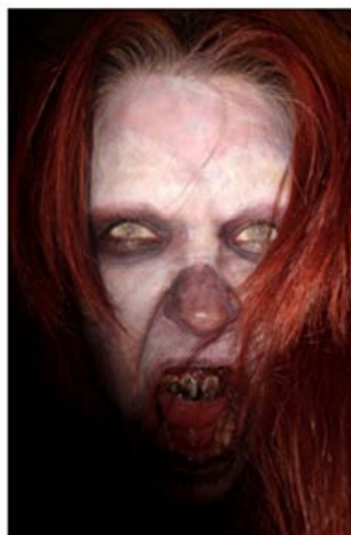
gists and even the clergy!
Zombie CSU taps experts from 911 operators to directors at Homeland Security.

Employing hard science and solid police work—not to mention jaw-dropping humor—Zombie CSU is the only guide you need to make it through alive:

- Investigate zombie crime scenes, collecting and analyzing evidence of a zombie attacks, and create a “murder book.”
- Explore the physiology of the zombie with top medical experts.
- Learn exactly where to place that head shot to bring a zombie down.
- Examine the psychology of the zombie and develop a perp profile.
- Observe medical science pros as they probe felled zombies for forensic clues.
- Sit in as psychologists, philosophers and the clergy discuss the mind and soul of zombies; and the impact a zombie uprising would have on humanity.
- Go into the field with investigative journalists to see how the apocalypse would be reported.
- Train with top martial artists to learn how to kick undead ass.
- Stand shoulder-to-shoulder with SWAT, street cops and the military as they confront the zombie invasion.
- Devise a zombie apocalypse survival score-card and more!

There are also comprehensive lists of must-see zombie flicks and background information on novels, books and reference materials.

Zombie CSU Artwork by Alan F. Beck, Frank Dietz and Nelson Robles



Meyer Jnr, Peter Mihaichuk, Geff Betrand, Peter Brown, Tootie Detrick, Kelly Everaert, Rob McCallum, Zack McCain, Brian Orlowski, Jacob Parmentier, Robert Pap, Graham Pratt, Doug Schooner, John Worsley and many others...

CINEMA & DVD



Dead in 3 Days
Austria
German, Subtitled in
yellow on black
Allegrofilm
Productions
Madman
Entertainment
R4 DVD

Reviewer:
Bob Estreich



A group of students has just passed their exams. At home, each of them receives a mysterious text message on their mobile phone – “You will be dead in 3 days”. They have all dismissed the message as just a joke by one of their number.

The first student, Martin, vanishes that night from the toilet during a party at the school. Although he has just disappeared, his girlfriend Nina compares notes with the rest of the group and they realize they have all got the same message. They suspect a student named Patrick, with whom their friend has recently had an argument. The Police officer, Martin’s cousin Kogler, is unhelpful, pointing out that Martin must be missing for 24 hours before they can take any action. Martin’s body is found the next day in the lake, trussed up and tied to a cement block. He was drowned.

Now another student is being stalked. Nina (Sabrina Reiter) realizes there is someone in the house when a dripping tap is mysteriously turned off. She is abducted and taken during a heavy storm to a building on the lake. It looks like she is to suffer the same fate as Martin. Another of the students has been keeping an eye on her, and rescues her, but although she escapes he is killed. Then racing away from the building where she was kept, she is struck by a passing police car driven by Martin’s cousin.

Another girl is killed in her parents’ hotel. She is drowned in a tank of water for fresh fish, and her throat is cut on the jagged glass edge. The killer seems to have an obsession about drowning the victims.

There are only three students left of the group of friends. Nina realizes she knows the hooded killer from his identikit picture, but she can’t work out where she has met him. Then she remembers. In their childhood a young lad named Fabian Haas was involved in a fatal accident (a fall through thin ice) that the friends may have caused, and the identikit picture looks like Fabian’s father. He held them responsible for his son’s death. There is only one problem – he hanged himself two years after his son’s death, so just who – or what - is stalking them? And he IS still stalking them, despite a police guard. Nina is having nightmares and feels she must be going mad. They decide to go to the old Haas house to see if there is anyone there. The killer is indeed there, and in the house the final crazed confrontation will take place.

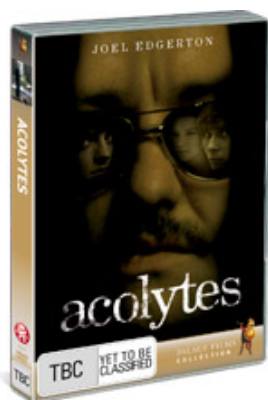
The backdrop of the beautiful lake country of Austria is in stark contrast to the terror of the night scenes as the victims are taken. The constant connection with water only becomes clear at the end of the film. Director Andreas Prochaska has used subtlety in this connection, and you are kept in suspense to the end. He allows his cast to develop their characters a little (before killing them off), and their apparent normalcy such as living with their parents, partying and taking pleasure in each other’s company make the murders more unreal but no less deadly.

Sure, we have seen many of the plot elements before in other films, but this film is at least as good as the others and seems more gripping because of the restraint shown by the directors. The quality of their acting and his workmanship in no way suffer from the small budget of the film. If you want continuous gore and splatter, this is not the film for you. If you want a finely crafted suspense drama with a bit of gore, try this one.

The DVD includes the usual "The Making Of..." and trailers.

Acolytes
R4 DVD
Madman
Entertainment

Acolytes is a very unconventional Australian horror film. If you are expecting a traditional horror or slasher then you are looking in the wrong place. But if you are interested in a dark, suspenseful film which explores the sexual underbelly of suburban culture then you will be challenged and very surprised. Director Jon Hewitt has created a very moody and atmospheric film, filled with terror and dread.



The cinematography is impressive, from the bland soulless look of the suburbs to the violent and threatening mood of the forest. The look of the film cannot be faulted from the wide lens exploration of desolate suburban landscapes to the dark hues of the forest which makes you feel there is terror around every corner. Various forms of rock music are also used to emphasize the alienation of the teens at the centre of the story. Some things are also obvious due to their omission; the film focuses on the three teens and the killers. You never actually see other people such as parents or policemen, other kids at school are nameless and characterless. It is as though the whole world is inhabited by the three teens, their abuser, the killer, his family and his victims. It is a very small, violent and disturbed world.

James and Mark are two teenagers with a shared past, when they were young they were both raped by local thug Gary Parker (Parko), who has just been released on parole. They both seem to have issues about their sexuality

and lack self confidence. They spend their time with Chasely (James' girlfriend) smoking pot, listening to music and generally doing very little else except occasionally smashing things to relieve pent up anger and tension. The relationship between the three is complex with Mark obviously jealous of James relationship with Chasely as well as there being an underpinning of homoeroticism. There are a number of scenes which explore the complex relationship between the three of them in a sensitive and revealing manner.

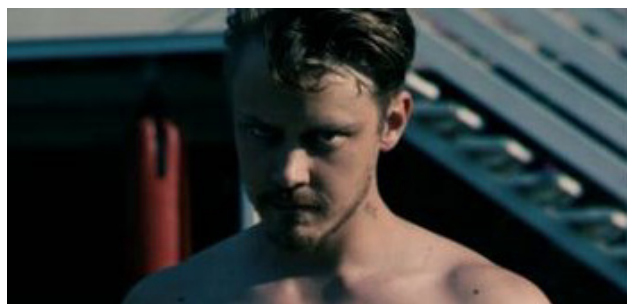
They live in the shadow of events from the past and are constantly nervous about Parko re-appearing in their lives. When they hear about the death of a young girl they decide to investigate. Soon they find a body buried deep in the forest and Mark describes the 4 x 4 he saw leaving the scene. While they first suspect Parko, they soon realize he is not the killer and they hatch a plot.

The tale now becomes superbly complex as they trace the killer to his home and attempt to blackmail him to kill Parko to satisfy their need for revenge. However, things are not quite as they seem and as the film comes to an end and the threads of the plot are drawn together, it reveals the unexpected and shocking truth.

Acolytes is very different from the run of the mill type horror film. It reflects on the destructive effect of disturbed sexuality from the sexual abuse of the boys to Parko's use of sex as power. (In one piece of harrowing dialogue he tells the boys he raped them simply "because he could").

The serial killer played by Joel Edgerton is a violent and edgy killer whose sexual delight in torture and violence is all too obvious for all to see. Yet due to the boys abuse they are willing to use him to exact revenge and this is the moral quandary at the heart of the film. In **Acolytes**, nobody comes out clean in the end.

Parko—Thug and Rapist



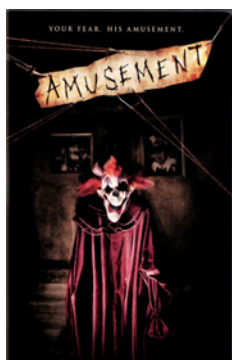
This bubbling volcano of sex and violence is all played out in the insipid and bland emptiness of the Suburbs. Edgerton's character has been somewhat influenced by the NSW serial killer Ivan Milat right down to the house in the suburbs and his obsession with hitchhikers but this simply adds to the authenticity of the character.

There have been some complaints that the film is too plot heavy and that this dilutes its effectiveness as a horror film. I feel just the opposite. There are lots of horror films on the market and too many of them are the same with little to offer except some blood, guts and shocks. **Acolytes** offers something more. It uses a complex plot to explore themes of sex, violence and abuse and creates a highly intelligent and effective horror film along the way.

Jon Hewitt has only used a couple of well known actors (such as Edgerton). Yet with a unique plot and some great cinematography has pulled off a very effective and confronting work of cinema. Once again Aussie horror has shown itself to be a very innovative genre !

Amusement
Distributed by
Roadshow (2008)
R4 DVD
Director:
John Simpson

Reviewer:
Bob Estreich



Tabitha, Shelby and Lisa are three lifelong friends. They met at school and continue to keep in touch with each other as their lives have gone their separate ways. One person they did not keep in touch with was the strange little boy at school who showed some serious behavioural problems, with a streak of cruelty and irresponsibility that led him to the notice of his teachers. The last time the girls had anything to do with him was when they brought their artwork to the school show. His contribution was a partly flayed rat stretched out on a wooden frame. They were horrified and pointed out that this sort of torture wasn't funny. Then they forgot him, but he didn't forget them.

Now the story breaks into three separate dramas as each of the girls encounter him again. Shelby and her boyfriend, on a long road trip, are following a truck around a highway blockage. The truck driver has a kidnapped woman in his truck. The attempted rescue goes badly

wrong. It turns out there is more than one kidnapper in the woods tonight.

Tabitha is babysitting her nephews. In the guest bedroom is a bizarre and scary life size clown, which to Tabitha's mind, seems to be moving. She checks it out then goes to sleep, but later wakes to answer the phone. Her sister tells her there is no such clown in the room. She looks and the clown has disappeared. So does she.

Lisa realizes that her shy girlfriend didn't come home last night. She was last seen with a new guy in town, so Lisa and her boyfriend go to the old hotel he lives in to check if Lisa is there. The hotel is a nightmare of booby traps, dungeons, and corridors. What Lisa finds is horrifying.

The three stories come together when the friends are thrown together in a dungeon cell complex in the basement of the old hotel. Two of the girls are trussed up and flayed much like the rat was, back in their schooldays, and they realize who is behind it. They are just toys for his amusement now, and he intends revenge for the way they laughed at him. Lisa, who was the strongest of the three, must somehow save her friends.

Unfortunately the film is let down a little by one problem. The script by Jake Wade Wall (Hitcher) is full of holes and unlikely coincidences. He is capable of doing far better than this. The plots are derivative and often predictable, and are only saved by good acting. Keir O'Donnell has the best maniacal giggle I have heard, and it's a pity he wasn't given longer appearances in the story. Simpson's directing makes the most of the unlikely script, though, turning it into a good suspense piece.

Don't expect miracles, but it's still worth a look.

Gotta love that Clown !



The Ante (2006)

Canada

**Produced by Max Perrier
& Valerie Gagnon**

Directed by Max Perrier

Peter Proffit Pictures

Panorama Entertainment

Suspense

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

Sam is traveling through a remote farming area and is lost. He stops for directions at a small farm and is accidentally gashed on the arm by a woman who has been slaughtering turkeys. She takes him into the house to patch him up, then locks him in the bathroom. While he is in there, there is a disturbance in the house. He escapes from the bathroom and finds the house is trashed, the woman is missing and there is a body in the cellar.

He leaves quickly, but later while stopped for petrol he hears a noise in the trunk of his car. The woman is hiding there and runs off screaming that he has killed her husband and kidnapped her. It is now obvious to him that he has been set up.

Desperate, he hits on a strange plan. He returns to the house and cleans up the mess. The body goes into the trunk of his car. With no evidence of foul play the police do not believe the woman.

When Sam gets home Jan, his Russian-born ex-stripper wife finds out what has happened and decides that the woman must have killed her husband for the insurance, and that she will need the body to prove his death.

They will get half of her money in exchange for the body. Jan sees this as a way of getting the money she wants to get away from her miserable, low-income life. Sam is losing control of the setup as his wife ups the ante. He is not a killer, but that's what he is becoming. Is he tough enough to take it?

The woman ups the ante again and rejects the demand, and it now becomes a battle of wills between the two women. Or so it seems.

Sam finds his wife planting evidence in his office desk. She has made a deal with the woman and he is being set up to take the blame. He is just getting deeper and deeper into trouble. With the word of the two women against him, there



seems to be no way out.

It is hard to believe that this is an independent film, although it was more than two years in the making. The quality of the plot, acting and cinematography is truly professional. Danek Kaus and James Chancellor have written a tight screenplay from Simon Perrier's original story, with many twists and turns, and brother Max Perrier's direction has made the most of it. The only sign of a tight budget is the mostly outdoors scenes and the limited number of characters. One thing they got right was to shoot the film in 35mm. The better quality Technicolor widescreen image really shows up in the outdoor scenes.

The actors are all superb in their roles, especially Paul Burke as Sam who spends most of the film covered in blood, and Anastasia Bondarenko who plays the money-hungry Jan.

The film has already won a number of Film Festival awards and it is surprising that its wider distribution has not been picked up by an international firm. Still, points to Panorama Entertainment for making the film available.

Blue Murder
3-disc Ultimate Edition
1995
Australia
Crime Dramatisation
Producer: Errol Sullivan
Director: Michael Jenkins
Reel DVD
R4 DVD

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

The story is told from the point of view of "Neddy" Smith, a middle aged criminal who is facing a long prison term on drugs charges. He is offered a deal by Detective Sergeant Roger Rogerson of the Armed Holdup Squad, a man who has little in the way of ethics and will do anything to get a conviction. Rogerson says he can fix Neddy's drugs conviction by tampering with the evidence, so Neddy reluctantly agrees to supply him with information on what's going on in Sydney's criminal community.

Neddy continues in the drugs world, and does well out of it now he is under "official" police protection. Rogerson becomes a rising star with the tipoffs that Neddy is providing him, and is decorated as a hero. Then Rogerson oversteps the mark. Warren Lanfranchi, a young dealer who has also knocked off a few banks, needs Rogerson's help. In an attempted holdup he has tried to shoot a policeman, but his gun misfired.

The police will not tolerate this. Lanfranchi asks Neddy to square it with Rogerson, and Neddy arranges a meeting between them. Lanfranchi will give Rogerson a \$50,000 bribe and all will



be well. It is a setup. Rogerson shoots down the unarmed Lanfranchi and tells it as a fight between a criminal and the police, adding further to his personal glory.

Sally Anne Huckstep, Warren Lanfranchi's girlfriend, goes to the TV reporters with details. She worked as a prostitute and details the bribes she has paid police and says that Warren's death was not a gun battle but a cold-blooded execution by Rogerson. Neddy is agast.

He was not party to the execution, but now has to perjure himself in court to cover Rogerson. In return, however, he is given a "green light" – he can commit any crime he likes as long as he doesn't kill a policeman.

If there is any trouble, the police will square it for him. He is now one of the inner circle and comes to regard the crooked cops as friends. As an added bonus he is even given some holdup tip-offs by the police. With the police covering him and handling the disposal of the loot Neddy is never questioned.

It works both ways, though. Following Sally Anne Huckstep's revelations a Royal Commission is set up to investigate corruption



Rogerson as having offered him a bribe, he is threatened and a character assassination job begins on him.

Meanwhile at the top, the Government has appointed a new Police Commissioner. The Police Force now has such a bad name that they must start the cleanup from the top and work down.

The Commissioner takes Rogerson's friend off the case, and Rogerson is arrested and charged with the bribe attempt. With his

high-level protection and support disappearing, he is suspended. He is not going to go quietly. With his connections, he organizes half a ton of heroin to be flown into the country. He wants Neddy Smith to distribute it.

This will be his farewell – a big killing, then disappear forever. Unfortunately the Federal Police have a tap on the phone of one of the partners, and are well aware of the plot.

One of the Commission investigators passes on the information in exchange for a bribe.

Other problems are developing. There is a territory war going on over drugs distribution, and "Rent-A-Kill" Flannery is losing his cool and

Richard Roxborough plays the notorious Roger Rogerson with much gusto..



in the New South Wales Police Force. Brian Alexander, a crooked solicitor who was about to tell the Commission all he knew of corrupt cops, is invited out for an afternoon's fishing on Neddy's boat. He finds it hard to swim with an old iron stove tied to his legs. This sort of thing isn't Neddy's style, even for a man as violent as him, but he is too far in now to back out.

In the early 1980s things start to go wrong for Rogerson. A Royal Commission is starting to clean out the corrupt cops, with the help of the Federal Police. The corrupt Police Minister is in jail. Rogerson is moved to a quiet desk job by the Assistant Commissioner, who is alarmed at Rogerson's ruthlessness and developing reputation. Rogerson starts rebuilding his power base. At this point Rogerson takes up the story.

He has been asked to do a favour and persuade a young Drugs Squad detective, Mick Drury, to lay off a case involving a drug dealer in Melbourne. Rogerson offers Drury a bribe and is affronted when Drury refuses to change his evidence. Could his power in the force be waning?

Rogerson introduces a hired killer, Chris Flannery, to Neddy, thinking they could be useful together. Neddy won't take part in the killing of a cop, so it is up to Flannery and Rogerson to deal with Drury themselves.

Drury is shot at his home. A friend of Rogerson's is put in charge of the attempted murder case, and creatively bumbles around getting nowhere. When Drury names



and doing rash, stupid things that are drawing attention to him and his associates. He could be a liability, so he is executed in another police setup. Neddy wisely decides that even though Chris Flannery was a friend of his, it would be best if he didn't make waves about it.

Rogerson scores a minor victory when the bribery case against him resulting from Drury's allegations is dismissed, but suffers another blow when he learns the Federal Police have him on camera making a large cash deposit into a bank account under a false name. They have him on tape planning the drugs import.

He is also still under attack by Sally Anne Huckstep over the death of her boyfriend. When she tapes an incriminating conversation with some of Rogerson's police friends and passes the tapes to the Royal Commission, she must go. Neddy Smith arranges her death.

Rogerson is under increasing pressure. Many of his mates are leaving the Force, and friends are distancing themselves. The Commission is investigating him for consorting with known criminals, in particular Neddy Smith. In a TV interview to answer some of the allegations against him, he says the reason he has spent so much time with Smith is because Smith is his informant. Smith is not impressed with this, and even less so after an attempt is made on his life.

Finally, Rogerson is dismissed from the force. Neddy Smith goes on a holdup spree, and without his police friends to protect him, he finds his "green light" is now worth nothing. He falls apart and descends into aggressive drunkenness.

Rogerson and a number of his mates are arrested and charged over the false bank accounts. Neddy Smith is involved in a drunken brawl that leads to a man being knifed. He is arrested for murder.

The most horrifying thing about this drama is that it is mostly true or based on fact. Generally hidden from the public view and protected by their own, members of the New South Wales Police Force were running crime rackets that eventually led to murder. Finally their actions became so blatant that a frustrated State Government had to face up to the problem and institute the Royal Commission, calling in the Australian Federal Police for help. The process of cleaning up the Force took years, and its work is still being carried on today by an independent Commission. The independent Commission was necessary because the Government's own Police Minister was found to be involved.

I have gone into the plot at some length because it shows how police were able to bend the law for so long, to the point that they became criminals themselves. The film is important today because it is a reminder of what can happen when Police officers feel they are above the law.

On the Extras disk is an interesting film on the making of *Blue Murder*. The producer, Errol Sullivan, says he had the script for *Blue Murder* in his desk drawer for some years, "waiting for developments". He was obviously aware of the state of the Police Force in New South Wales, as was his Director, Michael Jenkins. Jenkins had worked on other corrupt police dramatizations before and knew of the major players. Sullivan, when he went to make the film, also had Neddy Smith's manuscript. It was this that gave *Blue Murder* its underlying theme of the friendship between cop and criminal.

In spite of this, most of the key players were still alive and Sullivan arranged with their lawyers to publish the story as a book first, just to "flush out any lawsuits". Nothing resulted so the film went into production.

It is compelling viewing and a reminder that even the people in power, the ones that you trust, are only human.

Reel DVD

Web: <http://www.reeldvd.com.au>

Donkey Punch
2008
UK Film Council &
Film4,
Madman Entertainment / Asylum
R4 DVD

Reviewer:
Bob Estreich

Donkey Punch is directed by Director Olly Blackburn and produced Angus Lamont, Robin Gutch, Mark Herbert.

This is another in the Asylum line from Madman – carefully selected top quality international releases. Many did quite well in their own countries, but have dropped out of sight since then.

Three British girls on holiday in Spain set out for a good time in the nightclubs. They meet four British lads who have been crewing on a luxury yacht, and the boys take them out to sea on the yacht for a day's fun. During drug-fuelled sex, Josh gives Lisa a "donkey punch", a solid hit on the back of the neck that is supposed to give an intense orgasm as the girl's vaginal muscles clench. In Australia it's called a "Rabbit Killer". He breaks her neck and now the story turns darker as they must decide how to cover it up.

The boys decide the best way is to dump her body overboard, but the other two girls are not impressed with this callous idea. Neither is Josh, although he has the most to lose – one of the boys was filming him in action and the tape would be enough to convict him of murder. Marcus, the oldest, overrules any objections and steers the boat towards international waters. He



also threatens to release the tape of Josh onto the Internet if Josh steps out of line.

The body is dumped overboard. The girls attempt to radio for help but are overpowered. They may have to die as well, because it will now look to the Spanish police like a case of drugs, rape and murder.

Marcus decides he will have a little fun with one of the girls, but is knifed in the chest. In the confusion the girls escape in the life raft. One girl tries to light one of the lifeboat's flares to attract help, but it is seen by the boys and the girls are recaptured. She fires another flare – it hits one boy in the chest and he falls overboard.

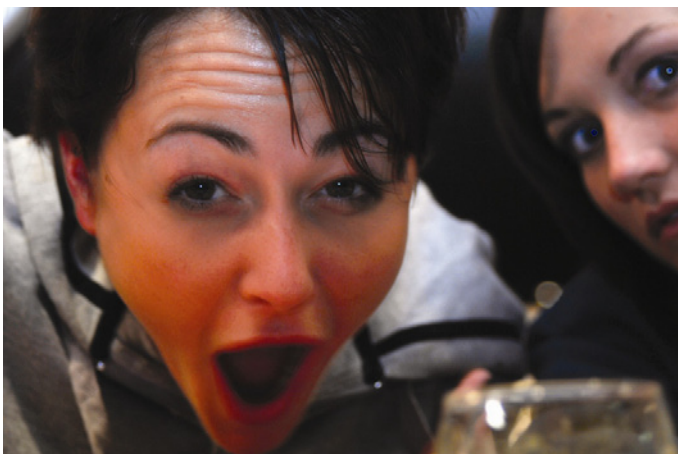
The girls are losing it, the two remaining uninjured boys are also losing it. At this rate survival for any of them is looking doubtful. The girls escape from their cabin and the slaughter starts again.

This is Olly Blackburn's debut feature film, and he keeps the tension going right up to the end. The much-mentioned sex scene is done with taste, the violence is severe but essential to the plot. He keeps the twists and turns going until you are not sure where it will all end up.

The actors are all perfect in their roles – a good thing in this film, because there are many close-ups in the confines of the yacht and they would show up poor acting quickly. The one disappointment is the sound. I often had to adjust the level to hear the dialogue, and then turn it down again for the next burst of music.

For some reason the sex scene is widely mentioned. Frankly it's pretty ordinary, but it is in the plot only to introduce the Donkey Punch that starts all the trouble. Don't let this put you off. It's a really good suspense / thriller.

The Kama Sutra turns fatal !



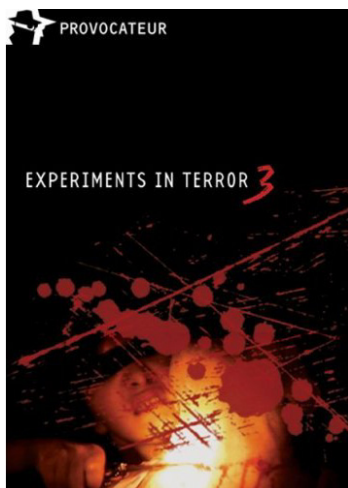
Extras

Commentary with Director and Producer
Making of Donkey Punch
Deleted Scenes
Interview with Director Olly Blackburn
Cast Interviews
Storyboard Comparison of Flare Sequence
Trailer & TV Spots
Stills

Images ©2008 Warp X Ltd, Channel Four Television Corporation,
UK Film Council, Screen Yorkshire Ltd, EM Media

**Experiments in
Terror, Vol. 3
Microcinema
R1 DVD**

Experiments in Terror Volume 3 is a further offering in a series of unusual and sinister horror shorts. Each tale varies in length, quality and presentation but each in their way offers a different take on the horror genre.



The collection begins with **The Psychotic Odyssey of Richard Chase** which comes in at 6 minutes. It is a very strange if not perverse short using children's dolls to create an unsettling experience. The short is based on the real life serial killer Richard Chase who slaughtered six people as well as drinking their blood and cannibalizing them. At first it may seem strange to use dolls to tell such a tale, but in the end it turns out to be frighteningly effective.

This is followed by J.X. Williams' three-minute **Satan Claus** (1975). Originally screened at a children's Christmas matinee it tells the tale of exacting revenge on a boss. It is surreal and nightmare like.

Jason Bognacki's **Loma Lynda: The Red Door** (2008) is a 10-minute excerpt from a 40-minute film. The Red Door is a modern Giallo film styled around the manic characters Loma and Lynda.

Sinister Dolls from Experiments in Terror 3



This dark and stylish tale of love and murder takes place in the street's of Hollywood and in the distorted psyche of the heroine. It has won numerous awards and mixes a severely disturbed induced vision with an impressive musical score. The excerpt is a bit "promo" like but does give a good experience of the film.

Ben Rivers' Terror! (2007) is some 24 minutes in length and takes traditional horror motifs and subverts them into something new. Rivers takes themes from *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *Halloween* to *City of the Living Dead* and *Friday the 13th* to showcase the means, formulas and techniques used in manufacturing fear. Rivers manipulates the viewer into thinking what will happen next and then stalls the climax time and time again until finally the peak of the film is reached with quite some gusto.

Mike Kuchar is the father of cult cinema, having inspired everyone from John Waters onwards. **Sins of the Fleshapoids** is still considered a B grade cult classic. **Born of the Wind** is another of Kuchar's quirky Sixties productions. For those who enjoy Kuchar's strange approach to cinema it will be a welcome discovery, for others it will be a little more difficult. Kuchar is a very acquired taste but still quite fun – more cult than horror I would say.

Manuelle Labor (2007) runs 10 minutes and was created by Marie Losier and Guy Maddin. It has the look of an old silent film. It is black and white quite surreal. It focuses on two sisters, five brothers and the birth of a pair of hands. Strange, strange indeed.

It Gets Worse (2008, Clifton Childree). This very bizarre film takes us on a journey with the passengers and crew of a very strange boat where a seafarer's scrotum blows up to monstrous proportions as his deadly alter ego possesses him !

Experiments in Terror, Vol. 3 is an impressive and intriguing collection of short sinister and horror films. The sheer diversity of which make it a very worthwhile purchase.

Microcinema
<http://www.microcinema.com>

Frontier(s)
2007
Horror
France
R4 DVD
Madman
Entertainment

Reviewer:
Bob Estreich

The French film industry has started developing a horror and gore film genre of their own in recent years, and this is a very competent product of the new wave.

A new, very right-wing President has just been elected. There is rioting in the streets of Paris which is ruthlessly suppressed by the Police. Yasmine (Karina Testa), her brother and a couple of friends are involved in a robbery, but get caught up in the rioting. They are fleeing the police when Yasmine's brother is shot. She and one of the gang take her dying brother to hospital, but must flee as the police come to question them.

The other two have fled for the Dutch border with a large amount of money. They have stopped overnight at a remote motel. They are distracted by the owner's sexy daughters Gilberte and Klaudia, but notice during dinner that there is something very strange going on.

Things turn nasty. The ex-Nazi German owner's family and the local policeman have some sort of deal going. They prey on travelers, both for the loot and for cannibalism. Tom is brutally bashed and it is left to the other boy, Farid, to save them. They are captured and imprisoned in

Frontier(s) certainly gives a new meaning to Family Values.



an old mine. It appears to be infested with some sort of terribly mutated humanoids.

Meanwhile Yasmine and her friend have also left Paris and headed for the Dutch border, and they have reached the same motel. When confronted by the family, they try to leave, but are taken prisoner. The father announces that Yasmine will be used to breed with one of the family's sons. Her friend will be fed to the pigs or the mutants. He has been hamstrung to stop him escaping until they are ready to butcher him. Yasmine, however, manages to dig her way out of the cell. Farid has escaped again, and has found Tom's body strung up ready to be butchered. Although he was the weakest of the group, he is now starting to find an inner strength in the need for survival. Will it be enough to save him and the others?

Yasmine is recaptured by one of the brothers. Will she survive? There are conflicts within the family – can she exploit these? The finale is bloody and the outcome unexpected.

Director Xavier Jens keeps the tension high right through the film. The political substory is really just a sideplay, leaving a cold barebones horror plot with a lot of opportunities for the actors to give their best. There are many clichés in this film – such as the runaway saved by the traveler in the car, who turns out to be one of THEM – but it's all done so well that you can excuse this and enjoy the film. It starts in a fairly quiet but menacing way, but by the end of the story there is as much gore as you could want.

Jens has shown restraint though. Rather than buckets of blood continuing ad nauseum, the splatter only goes on sufficiently to support the plot. Unlike many U.S. films of this genre, the plot is more important than the blood. This

gives the film a quality feel. If you like films of this genre, this one is a must.

Frontiers is part of the new Asylum range from Madman Entertainment and is presented in French, with clear subtitles offered in yellow over black.



God of Vampires Conquest Pictures

Web: <http://www.godofvampires.com>

God of Vampires is a Chinese vampire film with a twist. It combines a tale of the Asian mob, a contract killer and an ancient form of Chinese vampire into a single film with quite some punch. It is beautiful filmed, filled with dark hues and intense violence. The score is moody, forceful and evocative.

What I especially like is the unusual cross genre combination. It is an Asian crime film, a martial arts action film and a vampire film with a Chinese cultural focus all rolled into one ! These are not hammer-horror vampires but visceral and vicious creatures who are only stopped with Chinese death certificates and then by being dismembered. There is little of the romantic vampire mythology here.

The film opens as a fairly traditional Asian mob film. Professional killer, Frank Ng is good at his job, he works hard to complete his work "cleanly" and even be a role model for his younger brother. He is known to be the best assassin within the industry and is well paid for his quick and efficient style. We see him at work as he despatches a range of "victims" with style and some creativity, even taking mobile phone calls during his kill.

The "fix" tells him of a high value job on offer by an eccentric Chinese power broker. The power broker does have some very strange requirements - the body be burnt and the head must be returned to him as evidence of the kill. However the price of \$1.2 million is too good to be refused.



Frank eliminates the target's minions, slaughtering them without much forethought. We see him working his way through a wide variety of underworld figures with

quite some pizzazz.

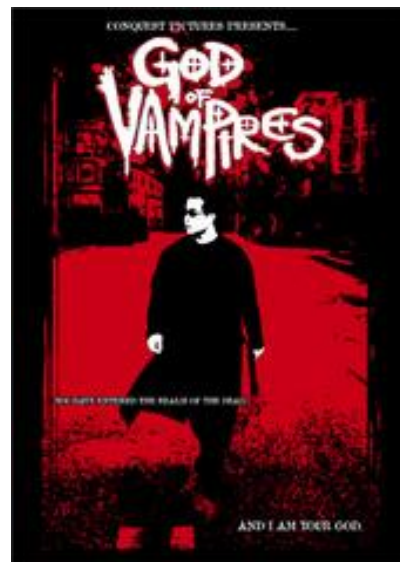
He confronts his target and shoots him repeatedly. For some reason he ignores his employers request to cut off the head and burn the body. He too late realizes the reason for the strange demands and comes to appreciate this was not his normal style hit; the creature rises from where he had laid supposedly dead and attacks.

Frank only just survives. But this is just the beginning – the hunter has become the hunted. It seems that this creature is a Kiang-Shi, a Chinese vampire and he makes a vow that he will inflict such pain on Frank he will wish for death.

Slowly all of Frank's friends and acquaintances, as well as his brother, are brutally killed. Frank makes an unusual alliance with the owner of a local restaurant who among other talents works as an illegal surgeon for the mob. Together they piece together the legends of the Chinese vampire and try to defeat the Kiang-Shi but the battle is just beginning.

God of Vampires is a surprising low budget film; it combines as Asian mob crime tale with solid martial arts action and a vampire film. The acting is professional, the cinematography moody and suspenseful and the violence relentless mixing horror with Hong Kong cinema style action from the very first scene. There is even a good streak of black humour throughout the film.

When you read the back story of God of Vampires you realize how much sweat and tears went into this Indie production. Rob Fitz literally spent every cent he had (and more) on this film and used every moment of spare time to make it. It took six years of obsession to create God of Vampires and we are very lucky he made such an effort. This is a truly striking indie horror film.



**Vampires, the Asian Mob, a Contract Killer
and Hong Kong style Martial arts !**

Gruesome
2006
Horror
U.S.A.
Cinemavault
Releasing International
Madman
Entertainment
R4 DVD

Reviewer:
Bob Estreich



The US edition was released as *Salvage*.

Horror is a cheap way for beginning filmmakers to get started in the industry. Unfortunately many producers go for rough scripts, cheap outdoor sets and low cost new actors in an attempt to make best use of their limited budget, and sometimes a good film is let down by these shortcuts. *Gruesome* shows some of these problems.

Claire finishes her night job at the local store, and is picked up by the rather disturbing Duke instead of her boyfriend Jimmy. He drops her off at home, then returns and brutally slaughters her. She wakes up the next day and assumes it has all been a nightmare. Her boyfriend picks her up as usual and all appears to be normal, but she is still shaken up from her nightmare. That evening it starts again. The locked bathroom door mysteriously opens itself. She hears voices in the basement. Later that evening she imagines someone may be in the bathroom while she is in the shower. It is a quiet night at work and when she drifts off to sleep she has flashes of someone running through the woods, escaping from ...what? Emerging from one episode of sleep, she sees in the security monitor a

Groundhog day with killers....



man hiding behind one of the fixtures – Duke. She hits the alarm. He attacks her, but escapes when the Police arrive.

The security camera footage, however, doesn't show him. It shows Claire waking up from a sleep, then apparently having a fight with herself. The police officer knows Duke – he shot and killed him the previous week. Duke had a cut up body in the back of his truck.

She nods off to sleep in the police car as it takes her home, but wakes up in her boyfriend's truck – with Duke. He tells Claire that "the whole world is made up – the only thing that is real is what you feel – when I cut your head off." And the nightmare starts again.

And the next day she is back at the store again when she wakes up, and the first day starts to repeat itself again. How can Claire break the cycle and stop her murder repeating itself over and over?

She feels there may be some clue at Duke's home, so she and Jimmy go there to investigate. Duke is there, apparently alive and well, and he kills Jimmy. She rings the police, but the sheriff tells her ominously "I can't tell you what's going on, but you'll find out soon enough".

Claire returns home, but Duke is now waiting there. She flees, and tries to find out more about Duke in the newspaper clippings in the local library. What she finds is even worse than she could imagine.

Lauren Lewis as Claire is a good actress with a lot of potential, but she isn't given much to work with in the script. It just doesn't allow her to be anything more than a cute girl caught up in something she doesn't understand. This is fair enough – the story only becomes clear at the end of the film – but the contradictory script does make the film hard to follow until the end. She does the best she can with what she has.

In spite of the script it is a tense gripping story, a sort of *Groundhog Day* with killers, that kept me watching until the story fell into place. At least those responsible for the film didn't fall into that other major trap for beginners, substituting splatter for plot.

Although my feelings are still mixed about the film, I feel it's a good enough horror show to stay on my shelf for a while.



I KNOW HOW MANY RUNS YOU SCORED LAST SUMMER

**Anchor Bay
R4 DVD**

"A cricket team are dismissed by a moustachioed serial killer with a razor sharp cricket glove and an arsenal of sharpened stumps. One by one the killer exacts revenge for the torment he endured 20 years earlier."

Ozploitation is not dead, Long Live Ozploitation ! I love Aussie cult cinema, I was thrilled when **Not Quite Hollywood** celebrated the long lost classics of sex, violence, cult and horror. However, being greedy, I want more. I also want Ozploitation films made now, not just from the Seventies and Eighties. Recently, it seems, my desires have begun to be satisfied. With the success of **NQH** and the re-release of a flood of early Ozploitation titles from **Mad Dog Morgan** to **Turkey Shoot** new Australian cult horror cinema has been hitting the big screen from **Dying Breed** to the truly groundbreaking **"I know how many Runs you Scored Last Summer"**.

This amazing soon-to-be Aussie classic combines everything one would expect from a cult horror film with a lot more. It thrills from the very first moment it opens with an act of barbaric bullying to the very end with the revelation of incestuous love and murder ! It is packed with everything from sleazy cops to gay hairdressers, incest and bullying, outrageous killings and a mad Christian zealot. All with a background of Australia's favourite sport: Cricket.

Bullying turns to violence & genital mutilation !



There is a gratuitous nude scene, gore and violence with a cricket twist and some great Aussie Pommy cricket competition.

Twenty years ago a pivotal match occurred in England between two under aged cricket teams, one Aussie and one English. After the match finished taunting turned to bullying and then violence as a young player is stripped and whipped with the Australian flag until he is genitally mutilated. The perpetrator moves to South Australia and changes his identity while his accomplices go on with their lives.

Twenty years later and English cricket is rocked by a range of brutal and vicious killings. Soon these murders continue in Australia and the body count mounts.

As the killings remain unsolved, Kim Reynolds, an English policewoman, is assigned to the sleazy Australian police team and together they must try and solve the case before more Aussie yokels get slaughtered.

Each killing is marked by a cricket theme; ranging from a spiked cricket ball to a nailed groin protector and all sorts of sharpened stumps. Soon the murders are linked to the original bullying event which took place ever so long ago but left lifelong injuries on the victim's psyche and genitals. Now the five remaining Australian team members (one cannot be located) are taken to a safe house in the country. But everything is not as it seems. One of the policemen is actually the missing team member and the English police woman has a very special relationship with the killer.

I know how many runs you scored last Summer is packed with gore, violence, cricket, sex and some truly surprising plot twists. This is a innovative film taking the slasher to a new level with a uniquely Aussie edge !

Awesome...

Jekyll (2008)

TV series, horror, miniseries

Hartwood Films for the BBC

Produced by Beryl Vetue and Steve Moffatt

Directed by Douglas McKinnon and

Matt Lipsey

Available for all regions

Reviewed: Bob Estreich

Jekyll is one of those films that the BBC does so well. It is a sequel into modern times of Robert Louis Stevenson's Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde classic. Dr Tom Jackman, happily married with twin boys, has realised that he is developing what he thinks is a split personality disorder. For the family's safety, Tom has moved out. As his other personality becomes stronger, he has had to reach some sort of accommodation, rostering times with his alter ego.

The Hyde persona has a cruel streak, since his mental development is about that of a child. His unconscious savage cruelties make him a risk to Tom. His attempts to take over their joint body full-time are making it harder for Tom to handle the pressure. Under pressure, his changes to the Hyde personality are becoming more frequent.

In the background, a mysterious organization seems to be well aware of Tom's condition and has plans for him. They have been tracking the Jekyll and Hyde effect for a hundred years. Hyde's amazing stamina, speed and superhuman strength are what attracts them, and his ability to rapidly heal himself holds medical promise.

**Dr.Tom Jackman ready to turn into
Mr. Hyde**



Tom now has another problem. Hyde has found out about Tom's family and appears to be trying to replace Tom there, too. He has spent an afternoon playing with the boys and enjoyed it, and is starting to regard the family as his, too. He is, after all, little more than a boy himself.



To force the change to Hyde, the organization arranges to put one of Tom's boys in a lion enclosure at a zoo. Hyde emerges and saves the boy. He is showing a little responsibility finally – or is he just protecting “his” family? He takes out his severe displeasure on the lion and on the organization's staff. A side effect is that both Tom and Hyde now can exist simultaneously, although their minds are still separate from each other, and Tom's efforts to control Hyde are becoming almost impossible. And the surviving members of the organization have learned to be mortally afraid of Hyde.

Nevertheless they must take him somehow, and their aim is to try to make the change permanent. They set out to do this by working on Tom's weak point - his wife and family. The final confrontation will be bloody and complex. When you have a one-man psychopath army who may or may not be on your sideand there are more twists at the end that none of them knew about.



Claire Jackman

Steve Moffat's update to the story is brilliantly conceived. It carries on from the original story quite well, and then develops into something more akin to science fiction. It is full of dark humour, suspense and true horror. He allows plenty of room for the characters to develop, and this is particularly important in the case of Hyde.

James Nesbitt plays the two roles wonderfully – the stressed out Dr Jackman in love with his family but removed from them for their safety, and the immature, demented but dangerous Hyde. Nesbitt does this mostly with personality changes, with only minor help from makeup. This certainly illustrates what a real character actor can achieve.

We can empathise with Tom, confused about what's happening but determined to keep his family safe at whatever cost to himself. We can even start empathise to some extent with Nesbitt's portrayal of Jekyll, a boy in a man's body. This becomes easier as the two personali-

Mr.Hyde—it is amazing what some make up and good character acting can do.



ties start to cooperate to rescue Tom's wife and family.

The other leading characters are played just as well. Tom's wife Claire, confused about her husband's apparent rejection of her, is strongly played by Gina Bellman. When she learns what is going on and needs to defend

her children, her change of personality is remarkable and even Hyde must be careful. The other supporting characters are just as well picked.

The extras include commentary, particularly on Episode 6, from the actors and producers. These give a good idea of the complexity of the plot and the abilities of the actors.

I can't praise this show enough. At 340 minutes it is a short (6-part) series, but packed with action and some very thought-provoking themes. There is enough to keep you guessing from one episode to the next.

This show really represents all that I enjoy in British films – complex but believable plot, outstanding acting, and a level of technical competence that gets the most out of the actors' performances.

Perhaps the best part is that this is labelled Series 1 – could there be more on the way? While there is a lot of chat on the internet there has been no definitive news from the BBC.

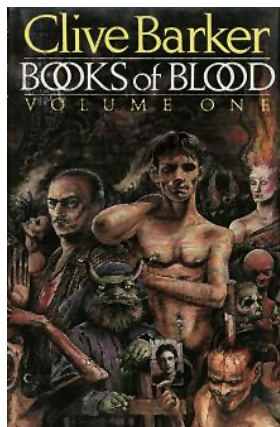
Jekyll: Season One was released for region 2 (UK) on 30 July 2007 and includes uncut episodes, cast and crew audio commentaries on episodes 1 and 6, and behind-the-scenes documentaries.

The US Region 1 release occurred in the United States on Sept. 18 2007, although the Region 1 Canadian release was delayed until Oct. 9, following the Canadian broadcast of the series on Showcase, which commenced at the end of August 2007.

It has also been released in Australia (R4).

The Midnight Meat Train **Lionsgate** **R1 DVD**

The Midnight Meat Train is based on a short story by Clive Barker which was first published in the Books of Book Volume 1 published in 1986. It was on the basis on these three books that Stephen King stated that he believed Clive Barker was the future of horror. It is a dark and terrifying journey into madness, conspiracy and an ancient mystery.



Directed by Ryuhei Kitamura, The Midnight Meat Train combines a superb plot with a stunning visual sense. The cinematography of a city at night with its brooding urban sprawl is evoking and suspenseful.

The ferocity of the violence is intense with Vinnie Jones as Mahogany, a superbly horrific serial killer. Mahogany is reminiscent of the Tall Man in the Phantasm series but has enough unique characteristics not to be derivative. In many ways this could be said of the whole film; there are a large number of well used horror motifs but under Ryuhei Kitamura's direction, they become novel and unique.

Photographer Leon Kauffman is on a mission to capture the heart of the city. He believes no one has ever really captured her soul before. After some prodding from an art critic he decides to explore its underbelly at night. After confronting a gang of thugs up to no good harassing a young beautiful woman, he finds that she is on the pages of the newspaper the next day as a missing person. He goes to the police with his photographs but finds them surprisingly unhelpful even belligerent.

When he returns to the scene the next evening he notices a large hulk of a man exiting the subway.



Vinnie Jones as Mahogany in full swing !

Cold and imposing, he is dressed in a simple charcoal suit and tie carrying a suitcase. Kauffman is fascinated by this character and follows him, only to be violently confronted. He notices a strange ring he is wearing and realizes it is one that is on a photograph he took the night before when the woman went missing.

His fascination soon turns to obsession and he follows Mahogany photographing him at every turn. He finally discovers where he lives and that Mahogany works during the day at a meat packaging plant and at night travelling the subway.

Soon Kauffman learns that Mahogany does not just travel the subway but sites and waits long hours until the right time. Her then makes his way to a series of trains and slaughters his victims preparing them "butcher" style.

The depictions of the slaughter are powerful and visceral and extremely graphic.



Leon and Mahogany battle on the Midnight Meat Train.

Mahogany is part of an age old brotherhood protecting a secret which exists way below the subway. The final scenes of the story are compelling, creating a very different thought of climax to the one that one may expect from a traditional slasher or horror film. This is a Clive Barker tale!

The characters are well developed from the "way of out his depth" Leon Kauffman simply wanting to understand the city to his hapless girlfriend. Vinnie Jones is superb as a "coiled spring" of a man who simply lives to fulfil his mission and does what is required to get the job done with brutal and cold efficiency. Even the train driver is a superbly odd and perverse creature.

The cinematography is remarkable with the constant journeys into the subway mirroring the characters descent into madness. The music has been perfectly scored and really helps sustain the sheer terror of the more horrific killing sprees depicted in the film. The violence and gore is certainly extreme and the R Rated is more than warranted, what Mahogany can do with a meat cleaver and butchers tools has to be seen to be believed.

It is great to see the dark visions of Clive Barker meet Japanese style horror. Ryûhei Kitamura also directed such cult classics as Versus, Azumi and Aragami (among others) and the combination has created a real horror lovers treat !

They are also very innovative. In one scene the camera seems to bounce all over the place and then you realize you are seeing what is occurring through the eyes of a head which has just been decapitated!

In another you graphically see teeth, fingernails and eyes removed as bodies are prepared as though they are cuts of prime beef. This reoccurring motif comparing human beings to meat and preparing corpses into "prime cuts" only becomes truly significant at the climax of the scene.

The scenes in the slaughterhouse are very evocative with vast long rows of animal carcasses and butchers breaking up the meat. While these have no innate connection to violence against humans, in our minds we quickly associate them with the work Mahogany does after hours. The film also seems to deliberately use similar angles when showing the animal carcasses hanging at the slaughterhouse and the human meat in the trains.

One could infer a moral judgement about meat eating here but I do not think this is what is actually being suggested. Indeed when you experience the climax of the film (which I do not want to give away), it is more an acceptance of the cold reality that "everything feeds on something".

Mahogany, however, is not just any other serial killer and this is what gives the film an extra depth. It would have been too easy for this film to fall into the slasher/serial killer mode and I believe this has been avoided by an excellent plot.

Ready to ride the Meat Train



**Psycho Sleepover
(2008)
Slasher comedy
Troma Entertainment**

Reviewer:
Bob Estreich

Psycho Sleepover was directed and written and produced by Adam Gosselin and Adam Deyoe.



All the stereotype characters are here in this happy little spoof – firmly virgin teenage maiden, sex-deprived boyfriend, a demented axe-wielding killer in a clown suit, shallow mindless girls in minimum clothing, and, of course, buckets and buckets of blood.

The town of Murderton is being threatened by a serial killer. Debbie (Rachel Castillo) has accidentally brutally murdered her demanding boyfriend with a knife and an axe over his constant but unsatisfied demands for sex. (“Yes, for the last time, I probably don’t have any STDs”). It



has turned out that she is a serial killer, so was her Dad.

Some years later her girlfriends have decided to have a sleepover, during which they will sort her out with a boyfriend for the big dance at the weekend. Of course, all the immature boys from the school hear about it and indulge in a bit of peeping and masturbation, so there are plenty of targets around for the coming slaughter. There is all the usual insensitive teenage girlie stuff with lots of boobs, as the girls appear to have only invited Debbie so they can make fun of her. You know they’re going to pay for this.

Debbie reveals her secret crush on her psychiatrist and they invite him to the sleepover. In his haste, the psychiatrist accidentally leaves the gate open at the mental hospital and all forty of the deadly inmates are loose, including the masturbator in the bear suit.

The house is soon under siege by homicidal maniacs who are doing their best to lower Murderton’s population. Inside the house things are no better. One of the girls tells Debbie “we have sleepovers, then we kill our boyfriends”. The psychiatrist “kills to keep others from killing”. Is everyone an insane killer? Well, yes. Even Debbie must kill mercilessly to survive. The party degenerates, as these things do, into a boob- and blood-fest. After all, what would you expect from a Troma release?

The film is actually quite funny and well made for a low budget effort, with lots of twists and turns to the plot. Working out just who is the villain will keep you watching until the very end, and until then you will probably guess wrong anyway. You can forgive some of the slow moments in the plot and the juvenile dialogue, because overall it’s a good romp. It’s everything we have come to expect from Troma, so give it a try.

Web: <http://www.troma.com>

Quarantine (2008)
Zombie Horror
Director John Erick Dowdle
R4 DVD
Sony Pictures Home Entertainment

Reviewer:
Bob Estreich

A TV reporter (Jennifer Carpenter) and her cameraman are assigned to film a Los Angeles Fire Dept unit on the night shift. The unit is called out to an old apartment block, but when they arrive they find the police are already there, summoned to investigate screams from one of the apartments.

An elderly lady appears to be hyperactive, ill and confused, but she suddenly turns vicious and kills a fireman by biting his throat out. Things go from bad to worse as more people appear to become infected by some strange disease that makes them aggressively homicidal.

The survivors find they have been locked in the building. The power is cut, phones don't work, even the TV is out. The reporter and the cameraman keep filming, but outside there appears to be chaos with helicopters and police guarding against anyone leaving, sirens signalling the arrival of more authorities, and a sniper team who will now shoot anyone who tries to leave.

The victims of the disease increase as they are attacked by the infected, and killing them is the only way to ensure any sort of safety for the survivors.



A tenant who is a veterinarian says the disease looks like rabies, but with an incredibly fast incubation time measured in minutes rather than days. A team from the Centre for Disease Control, the U.S. authority on infectious disease outbreaks, enters the building and says they have traced the disease to this building from an infected dog which got out. One of the CDC team is killed when a victim unexpectedly awakes. Others are bitten or killed by the zombie-like victims who are now infesting the building.

There is still one possible way of escape. The janitor tells them there is a shaft in the basement which connects to the sewerage tunnels, but he is killed before he can show them where. The three remaining survivors must find the tunnel then find their way out. The reporter still has the TV camera tapes to prove to the world the callous treatment of the quarantined victims.

Unfortunately at this point what until now has been a fine piece of suspense and horror degenerates into continual screaming and an increasingly vague and silly plot involving a monster in the basement. No amount of good acting can save the film from here. Despite the best efforts of Jay Hernandez, Johnathan Schaech and Greg Germann the film is rather let down by a poor, protracted plot at the end. One thing I must note, however – Jennifer Carpenter screams well. In the earlier parts of the story she is the calm, confident self-assured TV reporter, but by the end of the film she has broken down so completely that I wanted to shoot her myself to stop her attracting unwanted attention from the zombies.

That's how much the tension had built up. The build-up was also helped by the handheld camera work. It starts out steady and professional, but degenerates to quick shaky shots as the survivors flee from room to room.

The film is a remake of an earlier Spanish story called Rec. By all accounts the Spanish original was a far superior film, but even this one is gripping apart from the ending. In spite of this, it's still worth seeing because it is, up to a point, a good horror film.



Saint Francis Redemption PAL All Region DVD

Dita Von Teese Queen of Burlesque stars in her debut feature film **Saint Francis**. Having already proved herself as a burlesque beauty and fashion favourite, she has appeared in men's magazines from Playboy to Penthouse. She has now turned her talents to film in this new and challenging thriller.



Francis Bernard is a liar and a junky who lives by theft to feed his addiction. His consistent drug use and lack of sleep has caused him to exist in a world where reality and the imagination are constantly merging. He is delusional and at times borders on psychosis. As these two worlds collide he sees the past in color brimming with flashes of memory pulled from the more tormented facets of his life. At the same time, Bernard experiences the present, where he is a medical patient suffering at the hands of a mysterious surgical team, in shades of black and white. It is in this state he has visions of the future whereby his sister commits a terrible crime, a fate from which he must save her in order to complete his journey and maybe even redeem himself.

Saint Francis can be seen as the tale of a very dysfunctional family. The story unfolds from when Francis was six years old and he sees his mother commit suicide. He is haunted by the



memories of his mother's death as they repeat over and over again in his fragmented psyche.

As the surgical team continue to work on Francis, more of his past is revealed in flashes of memory, dreams and nightmares. It is now many years later and the head of the family is Dr.P. Bernard. He is the pastor of "The Church of Forever", which is a strange televangelism ministry preaching a new gospel mixing science fiction with religion. But the family is not the wholesome and virtuous unit one may expect. Soul, Francis' sister, is a Madame running a high end brothel which supplies girls to the family and various well-to-do Church members.

Sid, the younger brother, runs a drug business. Both Soul and Sid are not especially good "crime managers" and are having problems keeping up payments to their supplier. It seems they now owe a large figure to Sniper, the local drug lord and he is on the war path.

Soon the various threads of this dysfunctional family begin to intertwine with Francis' hallucinations and growing mental disturbance.

From strange Alien Abductions to Sci Fi religions, drugs to hookers, visions to madness. This strange tale mixes eroticism with a dark and macabre journey into insanity, religious obsession and perhaps even beyond.

Extras include:

Extended sexy scenes with world famous porn stars
Music video with Dita Von Teese
Saint Francis trailer
Satanic Sluts teaser featurette
Redemption trailers



**Screamers:
The Hunting**
Sony
R4 DVD

Screamers was an innovative and impressive Sci Fi film made in 1995 starring Peter Weller. Set on Sirius 6B in the year 2078, Col. Hendrickson (Weller) leads a team of soldiers trying to make peace with the opposition, the New Economic Bloc.



The major enemy however is not human, but a robotic device known as a screamer. Originally devised to kill off anyone without a “tag” and set to resolve a civil dispute between the owners of the mining settlement and rebel workers, these self replicating killing machines developed independent intelligence and began to evolve into new and dangerous forms. Screamers was a surprisingly success for a limited budget film and many years later is now followed by Screamers: The Hunting.

Set thirteen years after Sirius 6B has been supposed wiped clean by civil war, Screamers:The Hunting is quite an effective B Grade Sci Fi tale. A distress call reaches earth from Sirius 6B and a team is sent to rescue whoever is left alive on the planet. However, there is a major hitch, as they come out of space “hibernation” the crew

**Screamer Hybrids - Do you see a
resemblance to the hybrids from the
Underworld Series ?**



find they only have six days to complete the rescue before a meteor storm will destroy all life on the planet.

As they undertake their search for survivors, the captain of the team recognizes the dollar value of the screamer technology and downloads it to a portable hard drive. Human greed of course has consequences and during the process he unknowingly activates a lone screamer which then makes its way to the space ship. On arrival it makes mincemeat of the sole member of the crew remaining on board and drains the ships power supply using it to reactivate the screamers production line. Screamers are now produced en masse and ready to colonize Sirius 6B and beyond.

The battle lines are drawn between the surviving members of the crew, a small band of feral Sirius B rebels and the screamers. However, all is not what it seems as now the screamers can create hybrid human screamers and the question as to who can be trusted remains unresolved.

Screamers: The Hunting is not especially original. It pretty well uses every cliché in Sci Fi history. Taking its lead from the original film it then grafts on aspects of the Alien series, Predator and even Underworld. At the same time the CGI and cinematography cannot be faulted and it is surprisingly successful in creating a very suspenseful viewing experience.

The acting is reasonable if not great, sometimes it is a little wooden, but the character development and team interaction works well. Lance Hendrickson is a nice touch, but he isn't on-screen long enough to make his presence really felt.

Screamers is a fun and enjoyable Sci Fi film which while derivative has enough action to make it worth the DVD rental price.

It has certainly upped the gore and horror quotient from the first Screamers film and while not quite as memorable is still enjoyable.

The extra is a behind-the-scenes Featurette.

The Spirit
Sony Entertainment
R4 DVD
Writer & Director Frank
Miller

Reviewer:
Bob Estreich

The Spirit (Gabriel Macht) was once a cop who was killed in a shooting. He has returned from the dead, with superhuman powers of recovery. He fights crime in the City he loves ("She's my sweetheart, my play thing"), mostly with his fists in the old-fashioned superhero tradition. As a result he gets shot and beaten up a lot.

The Octopus (Samuel L Jackson) is an evil criminal mastermind, also near-superhuman. The Spirit and The Octopus seem to enjoy their protracted but non-lethal battles. The Spirit is not popular with the Police Commissioner, who regards him as a bit of an out-of-control cowboy and a womanizer. His daughter has a crush on the Spirit, which may explain his disapproval.

Octopus is trying to get the Blood of Heracles, which will give him special powers and immortality. It has been stolen by the Spirit's ex-childhood sweetheart, Sand Seraf. Octopus would also like to kill the Spirit as there is really only room for one superhero in the City.

Death is always close to the Spirit, tempting him to "give it up" and join her. She, it appears, also has a crush on the near-immortal Spirit. The Spirit is finding her blandishments more appeal-

Beautifully stylized Film Noir



Lots of black, whites & grays with flashes of Colour

ing each time he has a near-death moment.

The Spirit lays a trap for the Octopus and Sand, backed up by an overzealous and overarmed policewoman who, as usual, appears to be falling for him. She also, however, has a passion for big guns. "That cannon could take out the Moon....Is every goddam woman in this goddam world out of her goddam mind?" The final showdown will sort out many of these problems – who will finish up as the Spirit's true love?

The film lovingly preserves the comic book's moody look, in fact it's more like an animated comic book than a true film. Filming is, although in color, done in such a way that it looks like colorized black and white – stark and contrasty with only occasional splashes of color. It sets the scene of the dark, dirty, snowbound City perfectly. This City is not your bright, active Spiderman-type city but a place of alleys, docks, and wastelands. The period in which it is set is a little confused – elderly Trimotor aircraft share space with modern attack helicopters, but this somehow only adds to the slightly period look of the film.

The film also manages to preserve the comic's irreverent sense of humor. The Spirit's introspective ponderings are set off well by Samuel L Jackson's almost lovable Octopus. Some of the Spirit's best lines are when he is talking to stray cats. This is a great film. If you yearn for the old-style true superheroes, look at this one.

The DVD includes the usual "Making of", storyboards for an alternative ending, and a commentary track. When it is released in May it will be available on DVD or Blu-Ray.

The Spirit is based on the comic book series by Will Eisner.

Spree
2008
United States
Horror
Phantom Limb
Productions
Produced, di-
rected, written
by Mark Jones



Spree is a rather nasty film about a group of four loser students. In a drunken and depressed mood after a series of personal problems, they decide to liven up their forthcoming cross country trip by killing a person in each state they pass through.

They divide into two teams after agreeing on a set of rules, such as there must be photographic evidence of each kill. The two teams then go their separate way and will meet in San Francisco a week later. The winning team gets to walk away and the losing team must confess their crimes.

One team consists of Wes and Alex. In the morning the game doesn't seem like anything more than a drunken idea to Alex, but Wes fully intends to go through with it. His first victim is a hitchhiker based to death in cold blood.

Alex doesn't know how to handle it, but when he is bashed by a group of rednecks in Alabama he joins in willingly out of revenge. His setup to make the killing look like a suicide shows that he may have a hidden talent for murder after all.

From here it just becomes easier, particularly if the victim is a revenge target – someone who scammed Wes on eBay, someone who barges



in front of them as they are about to enter a shop.

They arrive in California and wait five days for their friends to arrive. The other team has been delayed by car trouble, so Wes and Alex are already on edge and tense. The second team then reveals that they haven't killed anyone, since when they sobered up they thought it was just a drunken joke. They are horrified at the killings, and although they have technically lost the game they say they must turn their friends in to the police. At this point Wes snaps and it all falls apart.

For an independent the film is quite high quality. Mark Jones has written a strong story and filmed it well. The relative inexperience of the actors shows through sometimes, but they all turn in a credible performance. Jones has a few films to his credit already and Spree can only enhance his reputation. About the only negative I could find was rather more swearing than necessary, although at the beginning of the film it helped to show just how big a loser each one was. Even the bloodshed is not excessive to the point that it detracts from the film.

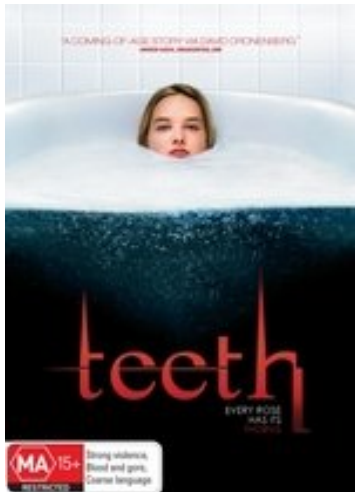
There is one curious part to the film. Jones plays the part of one of the friends, and by the end of the film I could have shot him myself. His character is a self-centred, pompous little braggart with an overinflated opinion of his abilities. I had him marked as the most likely to start the killing spree. I would have thought the director would have kept one of the better roles for himself, but Jones seems to have cast all the right people in all the roles. All the roles are well cast so Jones knows what he is doing.

Spree is not a nice film, but in this genre it is well made and definitely worth viewing.

Spree Website:
<http://www.myspace.com/spreemovie>

Teeth Reel DVD R4 DVD

One of the strangest myths is that of the Vagina dentate. The term is Latin for toothed vagina. There has been much discussion in psychological literature about the development of this legend.



Many believe it evolved due to man's resentment against needing someone beyond himself and hence man develops a love/hate relationship with women. He needs a woman for both pleasure and reproduction but wishes he didn't. Others see it as a cultural myth which evolved as a defence against rape. In Freudian psychoanalysis the Vagina dentate is held to relate to the unconscious fears associated with a lack of sexual potency and even the castration complex.

Teeth combines the legend of the Vagina dentate with a perverse and bizarre coming of age tale, mixed along the way with social commentary about sex education and the abstinence movement.

The film opens as Dawn and her stepbrother are kids playing in a pool. He shows her "his" and when she shows him "hers", he gets a rude shock and his finger is nearly bitten off.

Dawn gives her stepbrother a big surprise



Clearly there is something strange about Dawn.

We then fade to her teen years. She inhabits a suburb in conflict epitomized by her home, a clean urban house with two large smoke stacks behind it. Her family is also in conflict, her mother is dying and while she promotes abstinence her brother is a bong smoking, metal head with an aggro dog.

Dawn lectures at her local school about the importance of purity and runs the local chapter of the "Promise" movement where boys and girls wear a red ring to symbolize their virginity. The school "sex ed" classes has stickered over images of woman's private anatomy to protect the natural modesty of the girls of the school.

Dawn is unaware of her body and has not really experienced sexual desire, until she meets Tobey. He looks nice and even seems to understand her desire for purity and abstinence. But when they get together at an isolated local swimming hole he gets carried away and before long she bares her teeth and his member is a thing of the past !

Teeth explores Dawn's experience of her growing sexuality, her rejection of abstinence and her realization that she owns her own body and pleasure is her own to explore.

She develops a relationship with a young man and finds she can allow herself to enjoy her body without the teeth intervening, but when he admits he seduced her as part of a dare, he pays a very high price.

Dawn is now an empowered woman with a unique weapon, she disposes of her step brother teeth style and hits the road.

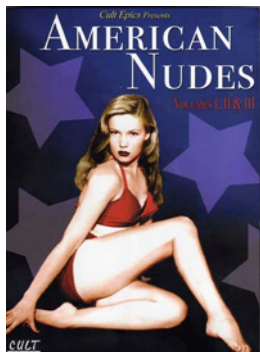
This is a very eccentric horror film combining a coming of age tale, a unique take on the monster/creature feature and reflections on women's sexuality, abstinence and Puritanism.

It certainly has its moments of violence and gore (and quite a few bitten off appendages) but generally is a black horror comedy with a unique approach to its admittedly unusual subject matter.

RETRO EROTICA



American Nudes Cult Epics 3 Disc digipack R0 NTSC



This is a difficult set of DVDs to classify. It is a collection of American "erotic" short films from the 1930s to the 1970s. For "erotic" read "pornographic" - although they may not seem so now, in their day they only pretended to be artistic.

The set of DVDs doesn't pretend to be educational – there is no commentary or sleeve notes. It is not really pornographic by current standards – as far as the women are concerned, you can see more on an average beach in summer these days. It does, however, reflect the trends in what titillated men over the years.

The first DVD is from the 1940s period. The plots, such as they are, consist of various pretexts for girls to undress. These include an expose of girls who take their clothes off for money ("They Wear No Clothes!" – shock, simulated horror !) and, of course, the compulsory "documentary" on nudist camps. ("They won't even allow dressing on their salads").

The obsession at this time was apparently with breasts. Very little is shown below the waist, and even that must have neatly-trimmed pubic hair. The girls at least were young, looked happy in their work, and the short films were well made and come out well on the DVD.

Volume 2 covers the 1950 – 1960 period. In this post-war time the producers seem to have lost the touch of simple class that they had in the earlier decade. The quality of the production seems lower, the women somewhat older and bulkier, and the action consists of them taking off their clothes and rolling around a bit on the bed. There is no attempt at a plot, however minimal. Girls "wrestling" each other is about as exciting as it gets.

Producer Irving Klaw seems to have been an expert at these quickie soft-cores. He and actress Bette Page turned them out at an alarming rate. His sister Paula also featured in some of his movies, and he gradually built up a stable of burlesque dancers such as Blaze Starr for his productions. Tame by today's standards, they really pushed the limits in the 1950s. Unless you are a fan of suspender belts and stockings, though, it is hard to imagine that these were regarded as pornography in their day.

There are brief appearances by Klaytan W Kirby, "Famous Underwater Danseur", in a couple of underwater "mermaid" sequences. The underwater scenes were filmed in the pool at the Town House in Los Angeles – it's prominently marked on the wall of the "ocean" in both clips. Kirby was better known as a producer of soft core porn which never quite made the grade. In the two clips of his work on this DVD, everyone appears to be dressed. Pornographic – well, not quite.

The films from which the DVD was compiled seem to have had a rough life as well, with numerous streaks and marks. This section could have done with a bit of digital retouching. Overall, the films of this period look a bit cheap and tawdry.

Volume 3 covers 1960 to 1970, just before some real money was put into the industry to produce feature-length shows like "Sex World". Color was introduced, but the subtlety is gone, the women are rather hard-looking, and nothing is spared from the probing eye of the camera. The clips show this period as the beginning of mass production hard-core, complete with full visible penetration and "money shots".

I am a little sorry that the set does not include some clips from the pornography renaissance of the late 1970s and 1980s, when good scripts and quality production led to some of porn's greater productions.

What is included on Volume 3 is some very early (around the 1930s) clips of surprisingly hard core films. The poor quality of the film hides the detail, but they are quaint and rather whimsical in their silent movie style, and a worthwhile addition to the collection.

Barbarella, Queen of the Galaxy
Retro Science Fiction
1968
Director Roger Vadim
Dino de Laurentis
Cinematografica S. p. A.
Rereleased by Paramount

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

Barbarella was based on a French story written by Jean-Claude Forest. She is a government agent in the year 40,000, and her job is to recover a missing scientist, Durand-Durand. Although the film was intended to have a semi-erotic nature, and certainly does, its style also makes it hilariously funny. A lot of this is due to Jane Fonda, in the title role, playing her part as a naïve girl in an unfamiliar human jungle. It also helps that Roger Vadim, the director, was a respected filmmaker in the French New Wave style who knew how to create a film which would become a cult classic overnight. To set the scene for the film, however, she is doing a zero-gravity striptease even while the

The beautiful Jane Fonda in Barbarella



titles are rolling. She then continues to lose her clothing (in a titillating but fairly non-revealing way) throughout the film. What clothing she does wear doesn't leave too much to the imagination, either. Points to the costume designer.



As Barbarella travels across the planet searching for the scientist, she must deal with a blind angel, Black Guards, and an evil Queen. When captured she is locked into the "Sex Organ", a musical contraption whose caressing internal parts will ensure that its victim will die of extreme pleasure overload. Barbarella turns the tables on the machine by getting it so excited that it explodes in ecstasy. In the process she learns a lot about old-fashioned sex rather than the pill-stimulated version her civilization uses.

Barbarella is packed with strange and wonderful situations and characters including killer dolls; a hairy man named Mark Hand who teaches her how to make love the human way; a beautiful sightless angel called Pygar, the sadistic world of the Black Queen; and the sex obsessed inventor Dildano.

The film was made as a quality production. Actors with a good track record featured extensively. As an example, John Phillip Law (Pygar the angel) currently has over eighty films to his credit. Milo O'Shea (Durand-Durand) currently has ninety. There is even a brief appearance by mime Marcel Marceau. The rich scenery and costumes (or lack of) give the film a big-budget look for its time.

It's well-made, funny, erotic, and shows what could be done by skilled filmmakers in the less politically correct days forty years ago.

The current released is uncensored and is 16 x9 enhanced with Dolby 2.0 sound.

Give it a try. It is still available from Amazon, and was re-released in Australia (R4) a few years ago.

Deadly Sweet Cult Epics R0 NTSC DVD

Tinto Brass is a well known art film maker who has primarily made his name in the field of erotica. (Examples include **Salon Kitty** and **Caligula**).

In this rather unusual cinematic experience he decided to try his hand at a Giallo film. **Deadly Sweet** aka **Heart in his Mouth (Col Cuore In Gola)** is a mixture of art film and crime-murder thriller. Made in 1967 based on Italian screen-writer Sergio Donati's novel "The Tomb of Paper" it has a uniquely comic book style.

It should be remembered when seeing such bizarre artistic flourishes as split screens, comic book style comments and colour filters, that Brass used these techniques before the development of what later became known as Cinema Fumetti (comic book movies) such as **Barbarella**.

The cartoons are especially impressive, created by Guido Crepax, a celebrated erotic artist.

Bernard, a French actor stumbles into the back room of a trendy night club to find his business partner murdered. Jane Burroughs, a very attractive yet underage girl is huddled in a dark corner muttering "I didn't do it, I didn't do it". She starts to babble about a conspiracy which



also involves the murder of her father.

Rather than call the police, on impulse Bernard grabs the girl and sets off to find the killer(s) before the police arrive. Now they are both implicated in the killing and are up against London's criminal underground as well as the authorities.

The story features a very convoluted plot, loaded with twists and red herrings and, not surprisingly, lots of love and eroticism.

The look of the film is quite unique combining a pop surrealism with split screens, black and white segments, sparkles, on screen comments and more. This approach is very different and when combined with a groovy soundtrack is certainly effective. The soundtrack is by composer Armando Trovajoli and the theme song "Love Girl" is quintessential psychedelia !

This is actually a fairly "modest" film for a Brass production, not much graphic sex or violence and the nudity and eroticism is more playful than anything else. **Deadly Sweet** is a bizarre mix of crime, suspense, eroticism and "art-film" and is a very entertaining experience.

Pretty or dangerous young thing ?



Cult Epics have done a great job offering a restored and uncensored Director's Cut which is 16 x 9 enhanced.

The picture is very clear with good quality sound with bright white subtitles.

There is also a commentary by Tinto Brass, a Lobby Card Gallery and a trailer.

Cult Epics

Web:

[Http://www.cultepics.com](http://www.cultepics.com)

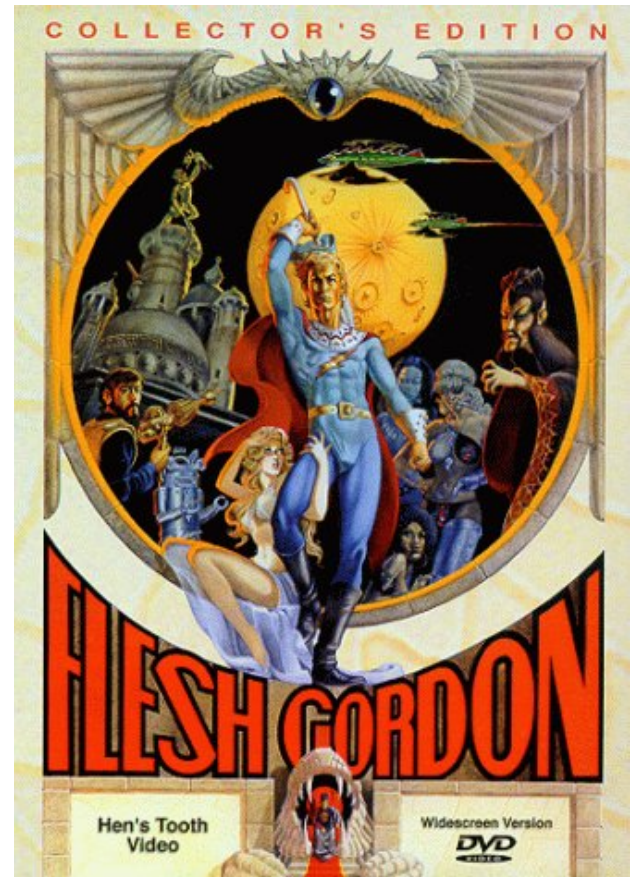
Flesh Gordon
Retro Science Fiction Spoof
1974 Graffiti Productions
Produced by Howard Ziehm & William Osco
Directed by Michael Benveniste & Howard Ziehm

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

This is a wonderful, campy takeoff of the original **Flash Gordon** (and is not, as we are frequently reminded, to be confused with it). Michael Benveniste's screenplay was done with a light-hearted look at superheroes, with a low level sex content to add to the parody. There was a rumour that it was originally to be a porno film, but an uncut release showed that the film as released was a bit mild for porn.

The plot uses caricatures of the familiar characters from **Flash Gordon**. The evil Emperor Wang the Perverted is bathing Earth with a Sex Ray. People are fornicating in the streets wherever the Sex Ray hits, and the end of civilisation is, as usual, nigh. The only person who can save the Earth is Dr Flexi Jerkoff, who has invented a very strange-looking rocket ship while under the influence of the Sex Ray. He needs a crew, and Flesh and Dale Ardor, Flesh's lightly-clad female travelling companion, are available. They go to the planet Porno where Flesh must destroy the Ray with the help of the locals. These are a suspicious-looking bunch headed by Prince Precious, Chief Nellie, and Queen Amora. Dale loses her clothing at any opportunity, Flesh is the subject of sexual advances from just about everybody, and a jolly good time is had by all. Flesh saves the day (and Dale) by destroying Wang's monster, a wonderful stop-motion animated creature.

Unlike many films of this genre, sex scenes were not the driving force. The dialogue is genuinely funny, the plot is well developed, and the



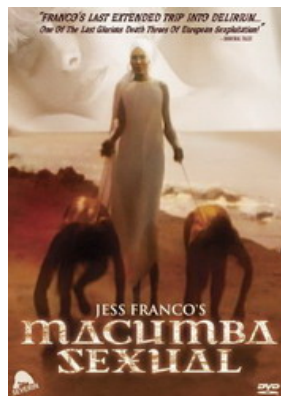
acting is hammed up to just the right level. There are many good one-liners, such as when the group step out of the spaceship onto the planet Porno. Jerkoff takes a deep breath and says "Good, there's breathable air on this planet". Wang's evil nature is described as the result of an accident when he was a young botanist - his member was bitten off by a rabid Penis Flytrap.

Films in this era were shot on real film, not digital, and the quality of the DVD conversion shows this. The production values were high – this was a fully professional film, not some sleazy porno amateur knockoff. Jason Roberts (Flesh) was an experienced actor who was perfect for the naïve and handsomely blonde leading role. The part of Dale Ardor was wonderfully underplayed by Suzanne Fields, who had a huge range of B-grade movies behind her. William Dennis Hunt (Wang) went on to do more than thirty other B movies.

The film was re-released some years ago and is still available from dealers such as Amazon. If you are not offended by nudity, sexual puns, homosexual and lesbian overtones, cross-dressing, leather, orgies, and monsters being penetrated in their anal regions, this film is a real standout for its time.

Macumba Sexual
Jess Franco
Anchor Bay R2
Severin Films R0

Macumba Sexual dates from 1981 and is considered by many to be Jess Franco's best film, offering a truly unique and surreal exploration of sexual transgression.



Alice and her husband are on holiday in the Canary Islands. While she is having a very relaxed time, her sleep is regularly disrupted by vivid and recurring dreams about a beautiful and seductive black woman known as Tara. In the dream she is both attracted and terrified of Tara who seems to wander the beaches on a local island with two naked slaves and then dies with a strange idol between her legs.

Her holiday is interrupted by a phone call from her employer asking her to visit a client on a local Island who wishes to buy a property. She is reluctant to break her leisure time but being offered a nice percentage of the sale reluctantly agrees to take the commission.

The journey to the island is unconventional and includes a boat trip on a old style ship and a journey by camel. For some reasons she travels in a way too tight top and a pair of very tight shorts which give her a truly revealing "camel toe!"

When she arrives, she finds herself in a peculiar Moorish resort owned by Princess Obongo. She instantly identifies Obongo as the Tara of her dreams, but rather than being frightened finds herself strangely attracted. Soon she is

The dead Princess Obongo.
What is that strange creature/plant/idol ?
We are never quite sure...



seduced by Obongo (with the help of her naked slaves Poppy and Tulip) and beings to experience a new world of sexual abandon, voodoo (Macumba) and sorcery.

On one level Macumba Sexual could be seen as a eccentric adaptation of the Dracula story. Alice is the real estate agent, Obongo is the Voodoo Priestess (the Dracula equivalent), her "vampires" are slaves Poppy and Tulip and the rather pervy hotel manager (played by Franco himself) is Renfield.

But this sells the film short. The power of Franco's work is in its dreamlike quality. It places emphasis on texture and atmosphere, rather than on narrative. Indeed there are long periods in Macumba Sexual when hardly a word is spoken and it is the images and flesh which do the speaking. It is amazing how Franco is able to use naked bodies in a way that communicate something beyond the traditional confines of nudity and sex.

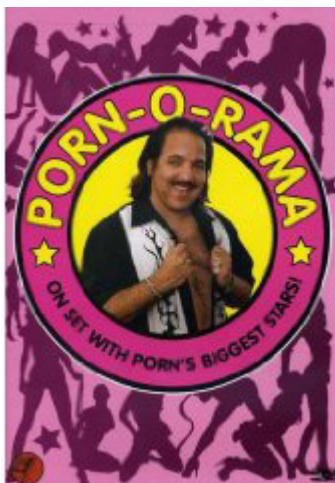
There is a powerful mood to the film created by some truly beautiful locations, evocative music and the sheer eccentricity of its major characters. Ajit Wilson as Tara and Obongo is a tall, beauty dark skinned woman who was a famous transsexual porn star. She has a certain gender variance which gives the film an eccentric feel, she is both very beautiful and a little disconcerting.

Lina Romay who plays Alice is a stunning blonde and the juxtaposition of the tall dark skinned beauty and the short voluptuous blonde works well throughout the film. Both spend most of their time out of their clothes and even when dressed show off their bodies as much as possible.

Macumba Sexual is brimming with nudity, eroticism and sex. It is certainly explicit and at times borders on hardcore but never becomes a simple porn film. It is a textured surreal exploration of voodoo and sexuality and creates an pervasive mood and atmosphere.

Photographed in Techniscope by Juan Soler off the coast of Spain on the island of Gran Canaria it is visually stunning. Filled with eroticism and sex. Brimming with dreams, nightmares and visions. It is a very unusual experience.

Pornorama
Private Screening
Collection
Liberation
Entertainment
R1 DVD
Shock DVD
R4 Release



Virtually unseen in the States since its production in 1992, **Pornorama** has been rescued from the vaults to offer us the documentary series on DVD for the first time.

It is offered in its original standard video presentation of 1.33:1 with mono stereo sound and since a lot of the interviews were done "on site" don't expect it to be perfect, but it gets the job done. If it looks like a porn film from the period what would you expect ?

Pornorama is an amusing yet insightful documentary into the x-rated adult film industry. Presented by legendary porn star and producer Ron Jeremy and porn star Alexis Devell, it was directed and written by Paul Norman - the man responsible for such truly unusual X rated films as **Bi & Beyond** and **Edward Penishands**. (For some reason Norman has a penchant for using prosthetics in many of his films).

Pornorama asks these adult actors the tough questions. What do porn stars do when they're not on set? How did they get into the industry? What do their families think?



Jeremy had an amazingly relaxed style. Perhaps because of his self deprecating humour and ability to put people at ease he is able to ask quite remarkable questions. For example when Interviewing Marcello while a sex scene goes on in the background, Jeremy asks, "That's your girlfriend getting a dick in the old pussy!" looking for a reaction. He confronts people on the toilet and in the most sensitive of positions and asks them lots of probing questions, including about their own sexual identity. A subject most seem to avoid answering.

It is also fascinating to note that in 1992 most believed their families did not know what they did for a living as VCRs were not in great demand. I am sure these performers will now find it very different in the age of DVD and internet distribution. It will be a shock to see Mum or Grannie on the internet doing the nasty Eighties style !

Each episode is 30 minutes and usually involves visiting the sites of a number of films in production. Some discussions are technical such as the significance of pre filming enema. Poor old Francesca Le, who refuses to use pre-scene enemas, is interrupted a couple of times when things get a little messy ! While others cover personal lives and relationships.

There are some very spooky moments. Jeremy, for example, asks Cal Jammer "So if there ever came a time that your dick stopped working, what would you do?," to which Cal jokingly replies, "Kill myself." Sadly that is exactly what happened three years later...

Surprisingly while this is an adult series, it is not especially explicit, it generally avoids showing anything that could be construed as XXX and focuses on the interviews and discussions.

Most of the shots cut off before penetration but there is a lot of nudity, so look forward to seeing such classic porn stars as Samantha Strong, Chantilly Lace, Brittany O'Connell, Shayla LeVeaux, and Alicia Rio in this entertaining as well as informative series.

The US release is from Private Screening Collection distributed by Liberation Entertainment while the Australian release is listed as being on the way from Shock DVD.

RETRO HORROR



Brainiac
(El Brain Del
Terror)
1961
Casanegra
R1 DVD



The year is 1661 and the Mexican Inquisition is under-way. Baron Vitellius is standing trial on charges of heresy and witchcraft among other things including the seduction of married women and maidens. The Baron ridicules the authority of the trial and sanctity of the Inquisition. He is sentenced to be tortured and then burnt at the stake. As he is led away, he displays his powers by transferring his leg irons and chains to his guards and walking willingly to his death. As he burns he reveals the identity of each of his persecutors and declares that he will return to take revenge on their descendants.

At precisely the same time a strange comet appears in the sky and he seemingly disappears. The comet is a lovely touch, superimposed on an obviously faked screen, followed by a fireworks explosion and then a large rock lands on the ground setting the stage for the next scene !

It is now the fun and sexy Sixties in Mexico and the comet has made its long journey through

The Baron about to kiss and kill



space and is heading earth wise. It crashes in Mexico and from it emerges a very badly made monster. It has a strange bulbous head which expands and contracts, hands which are octopod in appearance and a tongue which is forked and specially designed to suck out brains. It seems this is the Baron's true form and he has revenge on his mind.

The story now continues in a fairly predictable manner as the Baron, living on chilled brains, works his way through the descendants of the Inquisition wreaking his revenge. He takes delight in seducing (I mean kissing – this is a 1961 film!) their wives and girlfriends then sucking out their brains.

This is an incredibly silly film which makes no attempt at realism. It uses painted backdrops throughout as well as the most artificial of sets. However this just makes it even more endearing. So many of the scenes will stop you in your tracks, ranging from the terribly bad comet to the Baron eating chilled brains with the same delicacy you would reserve for caviar ! The creature is well, ridiculous, you know when the Baron is going to go “feral” as a strange light shines on his face which freezes his victim while he passionately kisses their wives. Truly hilarious stuff !

This is a truly superb cult horror title and the Casanegra release is very impressive. It is fully restored and there is a dubbed English track or a Spanish track with English subtitles. The subtitled track is certainly preferred but also includes some quirky translations which just add to the fun.

There are also quite a few other nice extras including an audio commentary, an essay on Mexican horror film, a nice set of collectible cards from the film, an interactive digital press kit and a poster gallery.

The Bride of Frankenstein
1935
Retro horror
B&W
Director James Whale
Universal Studios
Various Releases

Reviewer:
Bob Estreich

Bride of Frankenstein takes up where Frankenstein left off. The building is being gutted by fire, Frankenstein's son's body has been recovered, and it is assumed that the monster has been burned to death. The monster has, however escaped through the channel providing water to the mill. He is now loose in the forest, frightened, unable to speak, and desperately afraid of fire. After escaping from capture he seeks refuge in the home of a blind hermit. The hermit finds the monster to be a friend, and begins teaching him to speak. Gradually we see the monster becoming more human. Boris Karloff plays the role brilliantly and with great sympathy. He is not naturally evil, but immature and confused, and thanks to Karloff's skill we gradually turn to the monster's side.

Unfortunately the monster is rediscovered and recaptured. Doctor Pretorius, played by Ernst Thesiger, visits Doctor Frankenstein and says he can make a mate for the monster. Dr Pretorius is one of that traditional group, the mad scientists, and has already created miniature humans in a laboratory. Frankenstein, against his better judgment because he is due to be married, is once again attracted to the idea of creating life.

Just look at that haircut !



Elsa Lanchester as the Bride managed to establish her place in the film industry on this part. At her "birth" at the hands of Frankenstein and Pretorius, she is introduced to the monster, who sees her as a potential friend. It is Lanchester's reaction that brings the story to its climax.



Since the first Frankenstein proved to be a success, Universal was prepared to invest serious money into this sequel. Director James Whale was able to use his considerable skills to produce a masterpiece which many believe is better than the original Frankenstein. There are even moments of subtle satire and comedy, although the annoying woman know-it-all played by Una O'Connor should have been left on the cutting room floor.

The sets are large and splendid, the effects for this time are excellent. Unlike the standard rubber mask monsters who can express the range of emotions from mouth open to mouth closed, the skilful makeup work on Karloff allows him to show the monster's gradual evolution. The monster smiling should be a terrible sight, but instead Karloff makes it look human and believably happy.

The DVD has some extras in the form of a commentary, the usual trailers, and a stills gallery. They are historically interesting but do not add to the enjoyment of the story. Despite the age of the film, it has been transferred to DVD from a remarkably good copy. The sound suffers a little from vintage of the print.

It is available from a number of reissue sources, ranging from the Frankenstein Legacy Collection to budget reissues. For classic horror fans, this is a must-have.

Frankenstein
1931
B&W
Produced Carl Laemmle Jr
Directed by James Whale
Universal Pictures

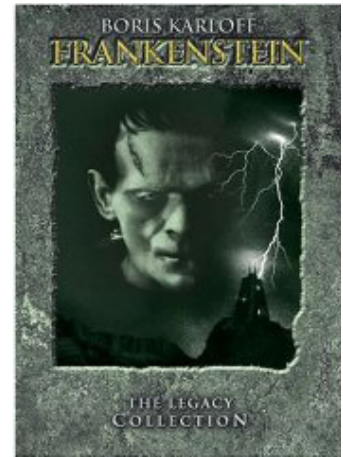
Reviewer: Bob Estreich

While *Frankenstein* was not the first monster movie, it was certainly the one that caught the public's imagination and became a cult classic. The earliest productions like *Nosferatu* and even a 1910 *Frankenstein*, while terrifying enough, did not have sound and often looked a little "foreign". In this film the English actors and settings, while rather incongruous, were more acceptable to audiences.

We start with the slightly demented Dr Henry Frankenstein and his henchman Fritz stealing a fresh body from the graveyard, then going on to steal the corpse of a hanged man. The brain is damaged, so they go on to steal another brain from a medical school. This brain is from a major criminal although he is unaware of this. He is working in an old tower in the little town of Goldstadt where he has become reclusive and secretive about his experiments.



Elizabeth, his fiancée back at home, is worried about him and resolves to join him. His old Professor reveals that he was trying to recreate life and Elizabeth and her friend Victor will not be welcome. This turns out to be the case, and their reception at the castle is unfriendly to say the least. Under pressure, Frankenstein reveals that he has discovered a ray that he believes is the source of life, and that tonight he will animate a corpse he has built from the stolen parts. To generate the ray he needs massive power which he will tap from the savage electrical storm hovering over the mountain.



He succeeds – "It's alive ! It's alive !" The others, despite their reservations, acknowledge that Henry has made a major scientific breakthrough.

His Professor discovers which brain Henry has used, advises him that "only evil can come of it", and first uses the word "monster". What Henry fails to realize is that he has created a living creature. He still refers to the monster as "it". The monster at this point is adjusting to its body, and its mind is easily upset at new experiences.

In spite of the Professor's warning, it is not dangerous as such, more childlike, but accidents happen because of its inexperience. When Fritz enters the laboratory with a flaming torch, the monster is afraid. Henry and the Professor regard this as an attempt to attack them and it comes to be regarded as dangerous. Henry locks it up in one of the castle rooms. The Professor urges Henry to kill it "like any dangerous animal". They prepare to give it a sedative injection but it overpowers them, kills Fritz, and is about to escape when the drug takes effect and knocks it out. At this moment Elizabeth and Henry's father arrive unexpectedly and find Henry unconscious on the floor.

The Professor encourages Henry to return to the real world and marry Elizabeth. He will arrange to have the monster humanely put down. The monster has other ideas and escapes from the castle. The quaint village wedding celebra-



Boris Karloff as Frankenstein

tions contrast with what is happening to the monster – alone, hungry, and wandering in the forest. He meets a little village girl who befriends him, and for the first time there is a little happiness in his life. Unfortunately his inexperience leads him to throw her in the river, thinking they are playing. This part was left out of the original print, but has since been restored. It does tend to change the viewer's outlook towards the monster.

Attracted by the noise of the wedding, he enters the house where Elizabeth is waiting for the wedding to begin. Shocked by its appearance she faints. At this moment the body of the little girl is carried into the village and the celebration becomes a tragedy. Hunting parties are sent out.

Henry finds the monster but is knocked unconscious. The monster takes him to an old mill tower and barricades them inside. Night is coming, and the villagers surround the tower waving torches and weapons. Henry tries to escape but falls heavily from the tower and is taken back to the village. The villagers set fire to it to burn the monster to death.

To a viewer who has not seen this film before, it will seem cliché-ridden – the torch-waving villager, the mad scientist, the homicidal monster. It must be remembered, though, that this is the film that spawned many of the clichés. Something that was often overlooked in later films is that the monster, in spite of its criminal brain, was actually innocent and childlike. Death had wiped its brain of any evils. It was only thought to be evil now because of ignorant superstitious peoples interpretations of its actions. Boris Karloff played the part brilliantly, and it is hard to watch the film closely and not feel some sympathy for the monster as he begins to experience the world. This film launched Karloff's career, deservedly so. (Later films made the monster more evil and destructive in an attempt to frighten audiences.) Dr Henry Frankenstein is played as rich, privileged and obsessive, and irresponsible. He tries to play God, and nearly dies at the hands of his creation. This theme carried on to many future monster films.

The film has a number of notable departures from Mary Shelley's book, and probably owes more to a 1920s rewrite of the book for a stage play. Increasingly the monster came to be incorrectly called "Frankenstein" – that is the name of its creator.

The monster was unnamed. The film now appears rather dated, but is well-made for its time. It is still worth watching, as it compares more than favourably with later attempts at monster moves.

A classic scene from Frankenstein



**Halloween
30th
Anniversary Box Set
Anchor Bay 2008
R1
All Region Blu Ray**

Halloween celebrated its thirtieth anniversary this year and to celebrate Anchor Bay has released a special edition set. It is hard to overestimate the effect Halloween has had on the history of horror. When John Carpenter first made this relatively low budget film nobody realized how it would revolutionize horror cinema or the number of sequels it would spawn.

Carpenter certainly never realized now many copies and adaptations would be made, none ever came close to the sheer originality of Halloween.

The Box set is a nice collectible and include a small Michael Myers mask as well as a number of versions of Halloween, Halloween four and five and a superb full length documentary.

The original Halloween film is offers as a standard DVD, a blu ray high definition edition (which incidentally is region free and will play worldwide) and the extended edition of Halloween.

It is fair to say that if you have most of these films already, there isn't a lot extra which would

**Jamie Lee Curtis set the standard for
terrified women who fight back...**



make you run out and buy this. However, as a collection it is good value. It is available at a number of places online (such as Amazon and Deep Discount DVD) for \$49.95 US and considering it includes a Blu Ray edition of the film this is very reasonable. Especially considering the high price of Blu Ray titles on the Australian market at present.

Sure, the mask included is a bit gimmicky, but as a way to get all these items in one package it is still worth dollars.

The Blu Ray edition of Halloween is truly astounding; the colours are brilliant and the music certainly works well especially with the uncompressed audio track. The Blu Ray is not "region coded" and plays worldwide.

The documentary Halloween 25 Years of Terror is comprehensive and examines all the different Halloween films with lots of interviews and candid discussions of the trials and tribulations of the story of Michael Myers as it traversed 25 years of cinema.

The package all includes lots of extras, the films all include audio commentaries and there are various featurettes, panel discussions, interviews and footage.

**His Name Was
Jason:
30 Years of Friday
the 13th
Anchor Bay
R1 2 DVD Set**

In 1980 Jason Voorhees hit the big screen in Friday the 13th and carved his way into pop culture and the history of horror cinema. Even today some thirty years later he is still one of the most recognized killers in cinema with his trademark Hockey Mask (even though it didn't appear until Friday the 13th III). Created by the combination of Victor Miller, Ron Kurz, Sean S. Cunningham and Tom Savini, Jason took various forms as the films developed reaching nearly superhuman status by the final incarnation. The films triggered horror, terror and sometimes even sympathy from the audience.

His Name Was Jason: 30 Years of Friday the 13th is a two disc set loaded with over four hours of bonus material. This film is a behind the scenes look at the franchise that broke horror box office records and made Jason a horror film icon. With over one hundred interviews from the cast and crew including the new Friday the 13th film, these firsthand accounts of never-before-told stories and rare behind the scenes photographs offer the ultimate look at the history of Friday 13th. All the films are given comprehensive coverage right up until the 2009 remake.

The feature itself is hosted by makeup effects master Tom Savini, whose significance to Jason should never be underplayed. He introduces the various segments of the documentary while following an intended victim through a dilapidated cabin. The documentary then follows the entire 11-film series through all of its various incarnations, from the first film to Freddy versus Jason and, eventually, the Friday the 13th remake.

On Disc One there is also "The Men Behind the Mask", which offers interviews with everyone who embodied the Jason persona, from Ari Leehman to Derek Mears. It's enjoyable and interesting to see each actor take on the character, especially when so often you wouldn't have known them behind the mask !

Disc two is packed with the extras and there is



so much here it is unbelievable. Yes, they have taken it way too far. I love the films but found it difficult to sit through so many interviews, reflections, memories and stories. But at least they are here for posterity.

"Final Cuts" is a compilation of the interviews done with all the Friday directors except for a couple of buggers who did not show up !

"From Script to Screen" covers the scriptwriters and it is actually rather fascinating to hear some of their ideas and realize what did not make it to the screen.

"Dragged From the Lake" is a bit of an ad-hoc mixture covering all sorts of things that did not fit neatly into the various thematic docs in the series.

"Fan Films" – umm yea ! Great idea folks.

"Friday the 13th in Four Minutes" is a rather amusing summary of the whole series into four minutes. Rather fun I may add.

"Closing the Book on The Final Chapter" is a tour of the cabin where the story began. It seems that the area is fairly untouched so we get a good look at where it started and recollections of the actors from the series. This continues in "Fox Comes Home" which looks at the barn and has Gloria Charles offering memories and reflections.

"Jason Takes Comic Con" offers various interviews with the cast and crew of the remake.

"The Camp Crystal Lake Survival Guide" looks at whether you can survive Jason's attentions and gives you some survival tips. We know they won't work, don't we !

"Inside Halloween Horror Nights" is a tour of the Camp Blood attraction at Universal Studios

"Shelly Lives" is a comedy skit/infomercial which features Larry Zerner, who played Shelly in Part III.

This is really a very packed guide to Friday 13th. The quality of the content varies and to be honest it is the main feature which is really the drawback. It is a product which has been a "little packed" to create a sort of "ultimate guide to Friday 13th" and I think this dilutes the value of the main documentary. Anyway, it is a comprehensive product, watch the sections that interest you and ignore the rest !



RETRO SCI FI

The Day of the Triffids **1962**

Produced by George Pitcher, Philip Yordan
Directed by Steve Sekely
Distributed by Beyond Entertainment

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

This was not the first film of John Wyndham's classic novel, but it is easily one of the worst. The writers of the screenplay made a thorough mess of Wyndham's carefully developed plot and managed to leave out most of the development of tension as the Triffids took over the world. In the end, of course, a happy ending was almost arrived at – science saves the day as was usual in this period of moviemaking.

It is actually a fairly good example of the films of the time. In the post-war euphoria it was appropriate that an American should play a major part in a British film. This could help with sales in the U.S. American moviegoers seem to have preferred the straight action/drama genre, rather than the carefully crafted build-up of suspense that the British had perfected, so this explains the butchery of Wyndham's novel. Liberties were taken in the script so the action would just keep on coming.

For those who are unfamiliar with the plot, a meteorite shower has struck Earth. It was loaded with spores of a strange new plant that was carnivorous and able to move itself around. It carried a poison-loaded whip-like device that it used to kill its prey. It would have been fairly easy to avoid, since it was over six feet tall and

Triffids get fired up !



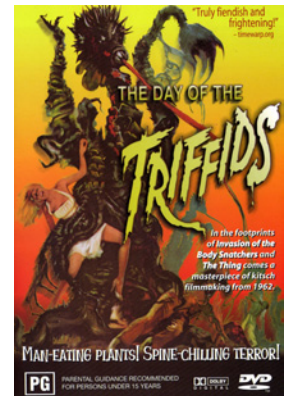
slow-moving, but a side effect of the meteorite shower was that most of the population was blinded by the glare. The old saying says "every dog must have his day", and with the best source of food blinded, now the Triffids will have theirs. Bill Mason, a sailor, is in hospital with his eyes bandaged during the shower. On awakening the next morning he finds everyone blinded but him. The film then goes into the tragedies that would occur if such an event happened – planes would crash, ships founder, many people would be killed in accidents, and technology generally would revert to the Dark Ages. The only hope for survival is to join up with other sighted humans and try to re-establish civilization. Along the way Bill meets up with others who must deal with the crisis in their own way. He picks up a couple of stray people and finds himself now responsible for a family. Can they reach safety (in the form of a submarine) that will take them to some refugee center?

The quality of the DVD is very poor. The picture is contrasty and very soft, and the sound is fuzzy. I suspect it was simply taken off an old videotape copy with no attempt at a cleanup or digital remastering. The lurid cover however is hilarious with the multi-tentacled Triffid carrying a struggling, briefly clad young lady. It has nothing to do with the plot, but is perfectly in keeping with the vintage of the film.

The film is a bit of fun and a good example of retro SF, but if you want to see how it should be done I recommend the BBC's magnificent 1981 TV series, also released on DVD in 2005 by BBC Worldwide. This sticks accurately to the plot, is better acted and filmed, and does real credit to the Triffids and to Wyndham's story. It has become the cult film that this earlier version could never be.

Force (now Beyond) Home Entertainment

Web: <http://www.forceentertainment.com.au>



Forbidden Planet
1956
U.S.A.
Director Fred Wilcox
MGM



The importance of this film in the science fiction genre cannot be over-rated. It helped start the post-WW2 boom in good quality presentations as opposed to the low quality monster-attacks-Earth budget horror flick that was far more common. MGM spent a lot of money on sets and props and produced a film that still looks pretty good half a century later. The matte paintings alone (the huge backgrounds) are spectacular, especially those of the planet's surface. When you add to this Robbie the Robot (he gets his own listing in the credits) and a group of very competent actors, you have the basics for a really good film. Robbie turned up in more later SF films than I can remember.

The plot was a bit Buck Rogers, but intelligent enough for all that. An expedition has gone missing and a spaceship has been sent to investigate. When it reaches the planet, the crew receive a message warning them against landing. The Captain, John Adams (played capably by Leslie Nielsen who later found fame in the Naked Gun series), naturally disregards the warning and lands. They are met by Robbie and taken to the base of Dr Morbius (Walter Pidgeon), the last surviving crew member. He has a daughter, Altaira (Anne Francis, wearing a mini-skirt which must have been daring for those days), the result of his union with one of the crew members before they were all killed by some unseen force on the planet. For some unknown reason the malignant force leaves the Doctor and Altaira alone.

Morbius reveals that the planet was once inhab-

ited by the Krell, a now extinct race who had space travel and visited Earth before Man developed. Their huge city is still standing and still functioning and Morbius has been gradually learning their technology. Captain Adams, meanwhile, is learning more about the lovely but naïve Altaira.

The ship is attacked by the invisible presence and a savage battle ensues. The crew just barely manages to drive the creature off. Now it becomes a matter of life and death to find answers to questions like just what is the creature? Why does it attack? Does Morbius know more than he is saying?

The film is not unique for its time in intelligent sci-fi (The Day The Earth Stood Still for instance beat it by about five years) but high quality films like this one stand out for their day. Perhaps it was because the plot was supposedly based on William Shakespeare's The Tempest. It gained credibility by having an unseen creature rather than a man dressed in a shaggy monster suit. It had a man dressed in a robot suit instead.

An interesting sideline is the role of Robbie the Robot. Traditionally robots were evil monsters who dutifully set about killing their creators, in the Frankenstein's Monster style. Robbie is portrayed as benign, and a useful servant. This portrayal as a friend to mankind surfaced first in an Isaac Asimov story called "Strange Playfellow" in 1940. The robot in Asimov's story was called Robbie. Coincidence?

The music was all electronic, a first for its day, although sometimes the electronic squeaks and twiddles of the Theremin (an electronic instrument) become a bit distracting. The film became a cult classic because everything was put together so well and it was treated as science fiction, not horror. It is still readily available today. If you have somehow missed seeing it, it is well worth adding to your collection. A cleaned up and restored (sound as well) version was

issued for the film's Fiftieth Anniversary. This version includes the deleted scenes that haven't been seen since the film was issued on laser-disc, and a superb set of three documentaries. Try to ignore the lurid cover, although the monster-robot-and-lightly-clad-maiden was just as much a part of the genre as multi-tentacled monsters and rayguns.





Plan 9 from Outer Space 1956

Genre: who knows?

Written and Directed by Ed Wood

Rereleased by Payless Entertainment
Black & White

Reviewer:

Bob Estreich

Widely believed to be the worst film ever made, Ed Wood's **Plan 9** shows just what sort of film you can make when you drop all the nonessentials like acting, sensible script and continuity.

"Can your heart stand the shocking facts about Graverobbers from Outer Space?"

The plot is simple. Aliens want to tell the leaders of earth to stop building bigger bombs before they inadvertently blow up the universe. They are finding it hard to get the message across, because Earth people keep killing their repre-

A classic cinema moment from what has been voted as the worst film of all time !



sentatives then denying or hiding their existence.

Plan 9 proposes to resurrect the dead so they can't be killed again. Armies of the dead will march on world capitals and deliver their demands. For some reason, they choose to start their campaign in a little out of the way town outside Hollywood.



The first victim of the aliens is a local woman, played by actress (and I use the term lightly) Maila Nurmi, stage name Vampira. This poor lady is doomed to wander the local cemetery at night, arms outstretched in some sort of zombie parody. Apart from this she doesn't do much to help the movie. This is a pity because its going to need all the help it can get.

"the flowers that she had planted with her own hands became nothing more than the lost roses of her cheeks". Yes, this is an example of the narration.

The next victim is her husband, played (briefly) by Bela Lugosi. Unfortunately he died (of shame?) before the filming was complete, so his role was supposedly taken over by Tom Mason, a somewhat taller friend of the producer. To hide the differences, the later actor covered his face with his cloak and walked around in a sort of embarrassed pseudo-vampire fashion.

The next one was a Police Inspector played by Tor Johnson, a rather large man, whose resurrected form seemed incapable of losing the shocked look on his face (he probably just realized how bad this film was going to be).

"Inspector Clay is dead murdered. and somebody's responsible!"

According to the DVD cover, the aliens are "unspeakable horrors". They look more normal than any of the previous three. The alien commander is the improbably named Dudley Manlove, and Tanna, his female second in command is played by Joanna Lee.

"Modern women!" "Yeah, they've been like that all down through the ages."

Now for the scenery. No expense was spent to make the scenery look realistic. The graveyard is someone's back lawn with wooden crosses stuck in it at random. Sometimes it is just grass matting stuck over the studio floor, which shows through in places. The crypt is an outdoor toolshed with cardboard crenellations stuck around the top of the rainwater guttering.

The aircraft is almost square in section. The controls, which the pilots are barely game to touch, are semicircular wooden cutouts.

One of the pilots carries a handbag. No, not a briefcase, a handbag.

"A flying saucer? You mean the kind from up there?"

"Yeah, either that or its counterpart."

The spaceship is a classic. Rather than the traditional cylinder, or the flattened saucer shape shown in the aerial shots (actually a street light, or plates glued together), this one is tall and has outside corners, square windows, and curtains. The control equipment is set on wooden tables that appear to date from the 1920s. There are no obvious engines, fins or steering equipment. In spite of these problems the spaceship is described as "like a cigar".

"Atmospheric conditions in outer space often interfere with transmitting". Atmosphere in outer space?

It is in continuity that the film excels. The graveyard scenes are at night, yet the police cars that attend are always racing through broad daylight. They must go a long way, because it is night again by the time they arrive. This could explain why they also change models along the way. The flying saucers change shape regularly. When they land, the engine noises always cut out before the saucer is on the ground. The last fifty feet of the landing must be rough. They emit a bright glow when hidden behind trees, but are not lit when the police arrive.

How did a film like this come about? Director Ed Wood made his first film in 1953, **Glen or**



Another classic scene from Plan 9

Glenda, about a sex-change operation. In this he revealed the trademarks his work was to become known for – incomprehensible plots, weird, cheap sets, and a total lack of talent. He had no training whatever, but that didn't stop him from taking on the multiple roles of writer, producer and director. Money was raised from whatever source was available. **Plan 9** was financed by his landlord's local Baptist Church. About the best that can be said about the film is that it was cheap. Wood's alcohol problems grew worse, and by the sixties he was reduced to producing porn films. Eventually even these failed and during the seventies he wrote transvestite porno paperbacks, until his death in 1978. In the early 80s he was rediscovered and given his reputation as the Worst Producer of All Time, even being the subject of a Tim Burton film.

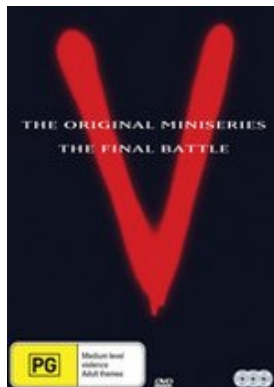
The most unbelievable aspect of **Plan 9** is that since then it was made, it has been in almost constant release. Its cult status gave it remarkable success and indeed Ed Wood has gained the sort of recognition he craved but never received during his lifetime.

My copy came from a discount shop for around \$5. That's the cheapest laugh you will get on DVD. There was even a computer game based on the film. Get some beer and a few friends and sit down and pick holes in the film.

The final word goes to Criswell, a "psychic" who narrates the film.

"My friend, you have seen this incident, based on sworn testimony. Can you prove that it didn't happen?"

**V - The Original
Miniseries/ Final Battle
3 Disc Set
Via Vision
R4 DVD**



V - The Original Miniseries was the 1983 mini-series written by Kenneth Johnson about aliens known as "The Visitors" trying to take over Earth. At first they are welcomed with open arms, but soon their hidden agenda becomes known and a resistance movement develops.

The governments of the Earth are surprised when fifty one huge alien spacecraft hover over their major cities. Their leader John introduces their people as a friendly species which looks surprisingly human and are seeking interstellar cooperation with mankind. Since their own planet is dying, they need access to a share of earth's resources; however they offer technology and medical advancement in return.

However, soon they start to blame scientists and academics for various uprisings and start "disappearing" anyone who stands in their way. These people return "brainwashed" singing the Visitors praises. Journalist Mike Donovan and medical student Julie Parrish uncover their real intentions and reveal the fact that they are actually a reptilian race. It seems they want the water of earth for their home planet and intend to use mankind as food ! They regularly "process" humans storing them "snap frozen" as a food supply to send back to their home world and they have no desire to share the resources of our planet, they want it all for themselves.

A resistance movement is formed which must fight against the visitors. Luckily for them there is also a fifth column within "The Visitors" who disagrees with their leaders genocidal policy

**A one night stand with an alien has dire
consequences in V !**



and is also fighting to save mankind.

The original mini-series was followed by V: The Final Battle in 1984. Johnson, left the production in its early stages due to a clash with NBC. The Final Battle was raced into production to take advantage of the success of the first series. While it lacks the depth of the first series, it does have higher production values and more action.

V was marked by its simplistic allegorical vision of the world under a fascist/Nazi regime. At times its dialogue and plot bordered on the hysterical with overwrought scenes and simplistic twists and turns. The script reads like World War II simply replacing Nazis with Aliens, it includes everything from medical experiments to collaborators, work camps to racism.

At the same time V did attempt to explore all manner of social issues from religion and science to abortion, nuclear weapons to loyalty versus collaboration.

V was celebrated for being a major Science Fiction series which utilized quite cutting edge special effects and attracted a large audience. It is interesting to critically watch the series and see its resonance in later science fiction cinema, from the look of the ships on Independence Day to the storage of bodies in The Matrix. For many of a "certain age" V has a strong nostalgic feel, however, it is normally a hollow memory when it is revisited. It is not a series which has aged especially well.

One of the most amusing aspects of the series is the Eighties look from the constantly open shirt of Marc Singer (of Beastmaster) to the overuse of hairspray. It seems that no matter how fast you run or how much action you get into your hair cannot move (and this applies to the men as well as the women !)

V now works as a cult Sci Fi experience. It is clichéd, dated and very silly but in many ways this makes it all the more amusing. I found myself strangely compelled to watch the whole damn thing even when I was laughing throughout !

Kenneth Johnson has also written a follow-up novel entitled V: The Second Generation, published in 2008 by Tor Books. The story is set twenty years after the events of the original miniseries. There is a rumour about a follow up TV series based on this book, but don't hold your breath !

War of the Worlds
1952
Collector's Edition Reissue 2005
Paramount Pictures
R4

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

Science fiction fans owe a lot to this film. It was one of the first attempts to film a science fiction story. Although the producers took liberties with H G Wells' tale and "Americanised" it, they tried to preserve the feel of the book and succeeded fairly well.

Wells himself did not believe the book could be filmed – he had written it as a period piece set before the first World War when aliens, space-ships and the death of civilisation were just writers' tools.

Then WWI came and showed just how horrible high-tech war could be and how helpless people were when faced by it. Wells felt that an audience may now be too sophisticated to accept his story. Then in 1938 Orson Welles produced his mammoth radio broadcast version of the story, and suddenly it all seemed possible again.

Although World War 2 got in the way, by 1952 the film was in production. Paramount's Cecil B de Mille gave the task to George Pal, a competent producer who believed in science fiction although many other Paramount executives did not. For the film to succeed, he had to make extensive use of miniatures and models. In spite of the brief appearances of the Martians

Aliens Vs Mankind in War of the Worlds



themselves, their machines had to be prominent in the film.

They also had to be believably powerful and futuristic, because the U.S. (with a bit of help from other countries) had just won World War 2.



It would be difficult to convince an American audience that their military forces, the strongest the world had seen, could be beaten by invaders from space.

That Pal succeeded in producing a SF classic is a tribute to all involved.

One big advantage was that the film was produced in Technicolor, a three-film-strip process that gave deeply saturated colours. This looked particularly effective in the green-glowing parts of the Martian airships and the bright stream of sparks of the heat rays. Even now, half a century later, the quality of the film transfer to DVD is noticeable.

The reissue contains a number of valuable extras, including "The Sky Is Falling – The Making Of War Of The Worlds". This covers the production problems, the model making, and the filming difficulties.

There is also a biography on H G Wells, commentary by the leading actors Gene Barry and Anne Robinson, and the recording of Orson Welles' radio dramatization that caused panic in the U.S. because people thought it was a real live broadcast – in spite of repeated announcements that it wasn't.

This reissue is excellent value, and is worth tracking down. Not only do you get the film itself, but a good background to what became one of the greatest science fiction films. It received three Oscar nominations and is consistently rated in the world's top 100 films. Buy it and see why.

WORLD CINEMA



King of the Hill (Rey de la Montana)

2007

Suspense

Spain

Madman Entertainment

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

While driving through a lonely mountainous part of Spain, a brief sexual encounter with the attractive Bea costs Quim his wallet. Further along the road his car is hit by a stray gunshot. At least, he assumes it is a stray shot until a stranger comes over the hill where he has stopped and shoots him in the leg. He takes off again, but stops to make a phone call for help. Further along the road a man steps out in front of him and again tries to shoot him, but he rams the man with his car and apparently kills him. The damage from the impact cripples his car and he is now on foot. Walking along the road, he again runs into Bea. Her car has been stopped by a flat tyre, but when Quim checks he finds a bullet hole in the tyre. She is being hunted too.

He repairs the tyre and they continue, but further along the road is another car riddled with bullet holes and trashed. Are the local people using the road as their private hunting area?

When they finally contact the police, their reception is hostile and disbelieving. They are put in the back of the police vehicle while their story is checked. The body is still on the road. As the police officers are examining it, they are both shot. Further shots disable the police vehicle. Now Bea and Quim are on foot in the moun-



tains. One of the police officers tracks them down and joins them. He is injured, but still has his gun. They cannot continue along the road since that is obviously guarded by the hunters, so they must take to the forest. The hunters catch up with them again at a flooded river and the policeman is shot again and again until a final killing shot finishes him.

The next morning the hunt continues with dogs. Bea is shot in the shoulder and trapped in a pothole in the ground. Quim continues on to search for help. Then we get our first look at the hunters.

The film is compelling suspense all the way through. The plot owes a little to previous films in the genre, but is so stunningly filmed and directed that it really stands out. The film went direct to DVD, which is a pity – it deserves more exposure. Fortunately it is now making its way onto DVD for most regions. The small cast and lack of inside shots looks like low-budget, but it in no way hampers the quality of the film. It is great to see it available as part of the Madman Entertainments Asylum range.

Leonardo Sbaraglia and Maria Valverde are superb as the hunted couple. The actors who play the hunters (I don't want to give away anything here) also turn in top performances. The film was selected for the Toronto and Spanish Film Festivals and thoroughly deserves its high ratings. Once again it shows that foreign companies are the equal of Hollywood, if not better.

King of the Hill is presented in Spanish with clear English subtitles.



Tokyo Gore Police
R4 DVD
Madman Entertainment

Surreal, violent, erotic and extreme and are the first words that come to mind when watching this film. It is also so quintessentially Japanese-exploring themes of authority, technology, sex and the limits of the human body.

But beware this is a very adult and transgressive film; from the moment it opens with a bullet exploding a policeman's head while his daughter watches to its final scenes of fantasy mixed with gore there does not seem to be a second where the screen is not awash with blood and guts.

It deliberately plays with the viewer mixing humour, fake commercials, highly sexualized violence and an onslaught of carnage which will have you reeling.

At the same time the plot is intriguing and challenging and explores a range of themes including the genetic basis of the criminal mind, the interaction between technology and the body and the danger of police control developing into an authoritarian state.

Yoshihiro Nishimura developed the special effects for the highly successful "The Machine

Beware ! This one bites



Girl" and is now the director of Tokyo Gore Police using most of the same creative team. The plot was developed by Yoshihiro Nishimura with Kengo Kaji and Sayako Nakoshi and unfolds on many different levels. It is both shocking and depraved, yet intelligent and reflective.

There are aspects which are actually quite moving and yet at other times you want to look away from the sheer overpowering violence shown on the screen.

The commercials throughout the film are innovative and send up the commercialism of modern life as well as the vacuity of pseudo patriotism.

The constant emphasis on the interaction between organism and machine is explored in a very intriguing manner

which at times is reminiscent of David Cronenberg.

The cinematography and look of the film is evocative. From the bright lights of Tokyo to its seedy sex bars, from the steampunk retro modernism of the outfits of the police to the way in which the “engineers” mix flesh with weaponry.

In the big business world of future Tokyo with its bright lights and technological excess everything has been taken over by the private sector and that includes the police. After initial resistance led by Ruka’s father, the police forced was privatized and now uses maximum force against criminals.

Things, however, are not as they were in the past. There is a new enemy on the block which is proving difficult to destroy. They are known as “the engineers”. They are genetically engineered criminals who on injury transform their bodies into organic-technological weapons. When I say organic-technological weapons, I mean some of the strangest human-mechanical combinations you will ever see in a film.

Penis guns, arm machine guns, acid-spewing tits, vagina monsters, human-mechanized sex machinations and lots and lots more. Some of these “creatures” leave the world of Clive Barker and Cronenberg for dead; they are truly perverse and astonishing. The fetish club where sex, bodies and machinery meet is a real joy. The living chair which urinates on the audience is an utter delight !

These engineers are nearly indestructible; the only way to kill them is to totally destroy their

The three Fates ?



Snail Woman

bodies exposing a small tumour in the shape of the key which seems to be the source of their mutant ability. The key is also the way in which their origin can be uncovered.

There is a small specialized amour clad department which focuses on destroying the engineers. Chief among the hunters is Ruka, an attractive young lass with a penchant for self destructiveness and killing the engineers with an oversized samurai sword.

We soon discover that Ruka’s father was murdered by a hitman when he tried to stop the police force privatizing and that somehow this hitman is involved with the genetically engineered criminals. The criminals are created by the Key Man, a scientist who went feral when confronted with the death of his father. It is this event that ties Ruka and the Key Man together.

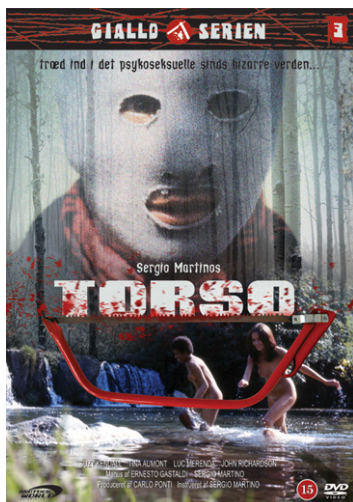
This is a truly original film which combines horror, fantasy, humour and some of the most wicked special effects you will ever see. It is brutal, visceral, erotic and compelling. There is lots and lots of gore, blood, sex and violence but so much of it comes with a wink and a smile so it is an enjoyable romp.

There are times I wondered did I really see that ? And that is quite an achievement in the horror genre. While **Tokyo Gore Police** could be classified as a horror there is a lot which merges into fantasy, it certainly reminds me more of Clive Barker’s **Nightbreed** than **Hell-raiser** for example.

If this is the future of fantasy for adults, then we better hold on as we are entering truly uncharted territory.

Torso
Another World
Entertainment
R0 DVD

When contemplating the world of Giallo cinema, one particularly impressive title regularly comes to mind, **Torso**. Torso's full Italian title is **Bodies Bear Traces of Carnal Violence** or **I Corpi presentano tracce di violenza carnale**.



Normally released in heavily cut editions, even in its US Anchor Bay release, this welcome release from Another World Entertainment is fully uncensored. The only drawback is that there are no English subtitles provided for the reinstated English scenes but this can be easily overlooked and the plot followed from the context of the scenes.

Directed by Sergio Martino this is one of his best known Giallo's from the Seventies. Besides Torso Sergio Martino's other giallo's include **The Strange vice of Mrs. Wardh**, **Case of the Scorpion's Tail**, **All the Colors of the Dark**, **Your Vice Is a Locked Room** and **Only I Have the Key** and **The Suspicious Death of a Minor**.

Art students at a Rome university are shocked when two of their fellow students are brutally mutilated and slaughtered by a masked killer.

Torso is a film filled with violence, sex and obsession



There is no shortage of suspects from a creepy obsessed would be lover, an older man who has just jilted one of the girls, a couple of drug-gies and the rather strange uncle of one of the girls.

When a third victim is found, the police discover a black and red neck voola (scarf) and are hot on his trail. At a press conference between the police and the student body, Dani remembers seeing the scarf, but where ?

She thinks it was on a local student (Stefano) who has become obsessed with her, but she isn't sure. A local store owner knows who purchased the scarf but settles for blackmail and is killed for his trouble.

As the body counts mounts and suspects abound, the girls decide to leave town. Dani's Uncle suggests the Villa he has in a small township so they leave for the weekend, where they can laze around naked, drink alcohol and cavort as suggestively as possible.

At times sections of this film seem to have been made simply to expose as much flesh as possible, show a bit of lesbian one on one action and offer some softcore voyeurism.

However, this doesn't last long, as the film veers back into violence as the killer has followed the girls to the Villa. The suspense created by the interaction between the killer and the four young semi-naked girls is impressive.

The killer, of course, is disturbed by some strange manner of childhood complex as one would expect from Giallo cinema. In Torso he is haunted by fleeting images of porcelain dolls and sexual perversion.

Torso is a film which has a dark and malicious feel. It is moody and atmospheric and the killings are brutal. Torso is surprisingly explicit packed with nudity, sex and even some girl on girl action. The movement between sex and violence, much of it eroticized has been criticized by many, but it does make it a very successful film.

The AWE edition includes alternative Italian and German intros and alternate US credits. It is interesting that while the R4 release is listed as uncut, this AWE release includes quite a bit of extra footage.

You, the Living
Sweden 2007
Artificial Eye 2008
R2 DVD

Reviewer:
Bob Estreich

Swedish with clear
English subtitles
Director & Scriptwriter
Roy Andersson
Producer Pernilla Sandstrom



"You, The Living is about the human being, about her greatness and her miserableness, her joy and her sorrow, her self-confidence and anxiety. A being at whom we want to laugh and also cry for. It is simply a tragic comedy or comic tragedy about us."

Roy Andersson, Director

I must admit I am at a complete loss about this film. It must be a comedy – nothing so bizarre could be anything else, but it is so sombre that "comedy" doesn't really describe it. There is no particular narrative to it, just a series of short scenes in which various characters appear and disappear, sometimes never to return. It seems to be obsessed with peoples' dreams, which is probably just as well since their daily lives are so dull.

Roy Andersson is usually a maker of commercials, which probably is reflected in the short nature of each scene. He has made films before, including Songs From The Second Floor, which I have not seen. "Songs" is apparently a lot like this one. His work is almost clinical and mostly done in the studio. The greenish shade

of fluorescent lights pervades the film, giving everything a gloomy look. Even the few outside shots seem to feature an awful lot of rain – hardly a tourist advertisement for Sweden.

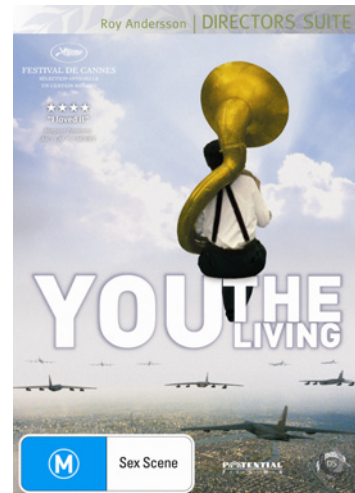
The constant introduction of new characters and new problems keeps the viewer off balance to the point that it is almost a pleasure to see a previous character reappear and carry out the next part of his boring little life. The only constant is that in most scenes there is a person standing there, motionless, uninvolved, but observing ... what?

There are some slightly Monty Pythonesque sketches to provide all-too-brief moments of more normal humour, but overall the film is quite surreal. That is not to say that it isn't funny. It's just funny in a very different way. Like that other well known Swedish comedy piece, the Volvo.

Although it's not a comedy in the conventional sense, I just couldn't turn it off until the very end – it's that compelling. I am unsure whether this was because I was waiting to see what happened next, or just waiting to see if anything happened – just like the solitary watcher.

The extras include a Director's commentary, Behind the Scenes, the usual trailer, and excerpts from other Andersson films. These really don't help make any better sense of the film.

You, the Living is about to be released in Australia (R4) by Madman Entertainment.



Images

©

MMVII ROY ANDERSSON FILMPRODUKTION AB THERMIDOR FILMPRODUKTION, PARISIENNE DE PRODUCTION, POSTHUS TEATRET, 4 1/2, STYLEJAM, SVT, ARTE FRANCE CINEMA, WDR

THINKING TIME!



4 Years of Thunder

1996

Directed by John Honey

Network USA for the History Channel

Magna Pacific 2005

R4 DVD

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

This magnificent and authoritative 3-DVD set documents the rise of the aeroplane as a fighting machine during World War 1. In this comparatively short period they matured from fragile toys to fast and deadly fighters, and to the reliable heavy bombers that forged the world's airlines post-War.

There had been some attempts at using flying machines in minor wars around the world, usually for reconnaissance or light bombing, but these were more spontaneous than planned. The French led military development in Europe for a while, and appropriately the first aerial combat of the war was over Rheims when a French aeroplane shot down a German plane – the observer in the French aircraft had taken up a Hotchkiss machine gun with him. Aircraft were still essentially a reconnaissance or artillery spotting tool.

The military commanders of the time had no idea of other uses, since aerial tactics and capabilities were still developing.



So were the aircraft.

They were underpowered, unarmed, slow and had poor handling. Still, flying had captured the Europeans' imagination and developments came quickly. These developments were accelerated by the War.

In the United States the Wright brothers were well ahead of European aircraft development, but few in Europe were aware of this. A demonstration flight in Paris showed how much more maneuverable the Wright's aircraft was.

Their flights were already longer than any attempted in Europe. One flight, however, caught Europe's attention. Louis Bleriot crossed the English Channel in 37 minutes in an aircraft of his own design. To those looking ahead, this gave the aircraft an attacking range far greater than anything else available to the military.

The developments of this time are well explained and demonstrated in the documentary,

showing how gradually the aircraft improved.

The Nieuports gave the Allies an edge over the almost legendary German Fokker, and the SPAD 7 kept that lead. In the race for better technology, the next lead went to the German Albatross. As the combatants fought to overcome each others' technical superiority the planes evolved to the point that some designs only went out of service towards the beginning of the second World War. Even naval aircraft get a mention.

The documentary shows the aircraft race from both sides, and the final episode introduces the U.S.A. and its contribution. For most of the War the U.S did not have its own combat aircraft and was forced to use French and English models.

Film footage of rebuilt or replica planes is impressive and highlights just how fragile the earliest aircraft were. Many real or replica historic aircraft were filmed from the collection at the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome or from air shows.

There is a lot of original footage, far more than I have seen in any similar documentary. It shows the pilots, their aircraft, and even their off-duty lifestyles. The quality of the footage varies, of course, due to the variety of sources and their age.

The various episodes also show the rise of the air Ace and detail the history of many of them – Richthofen, Rickenbacker, Mannock and others who brought the aircraft to the public's attention and showed the human face of the air war.

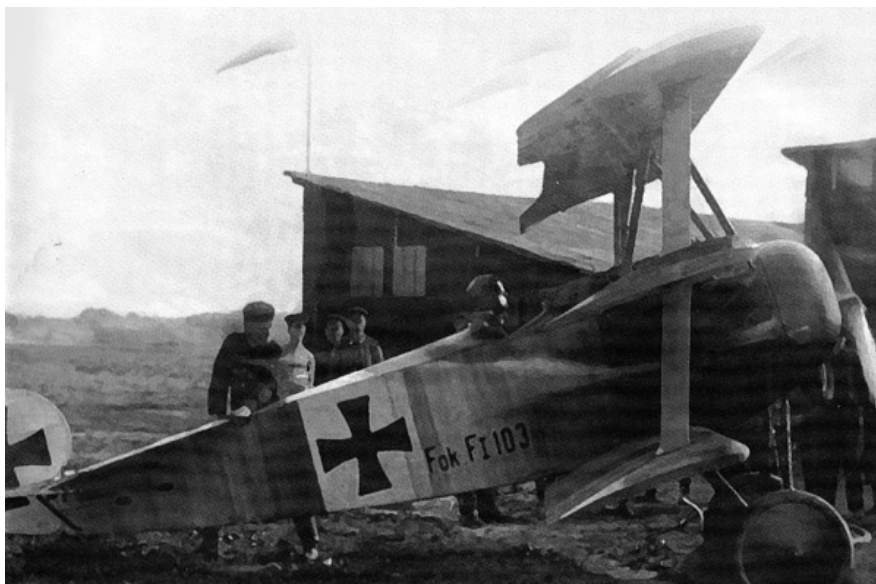
Chapters:

Flying To War 1909 – 1914

Credits
First European Flight
Curtiss
Grand Adventure

The Fokker Scourge 1915 – 1916

New French Fighter
Battle of Verdun
Fokker E3 Fails



Bloody April

Von Richthofen
Germany Celebrates
Fokker Triplane

Winged Victory

Pursuit Squadron
Spring 1918
Arming Planes

This set when it originally came out sold for around \$80 AUS. I got my copy recently for under \$16 AUS and I have seen it advertised for prices up to \$32. It represents excellent value. A word of warning – the reissue appears to be Australian, and may only be available for Region 4. Check that your player can handle this if you cannot obtain a copy for your region.

A Brief History of the Future Jacques Attali Allen & Unwin 2009

Reviewer:
Bob Estreich

Jacques Attali was President of the European Bank of Development in the 1990s and also has a deep interest in the history of economic development.

In this book he traces the development of nine



major “nodes” in world power, including Bruges, Venice, Antwerp, Amsterdam, London, and New York. He proposes that each of the nodes was developed on the basis of a number of critical factors, including transport, a strategic position, a productive hinterland to support the growth of the city, and technical advances that gave that particular city an advantage over its competitors (For example the development of printing in Antwerp).

In the later nodes like London and New York the driving force was finance and insurance, and he covers the financial events leading to the global market crash we are currently experiencing. His explanation of the collapse of each node is, while strongly financially based, still historically based and he makes a strong case for his point of view.

He also proposes that a new ninth node, based on Los Angeles, will develop around 2035, fuelled by the growth in the entertainment industry of nearby Hollywood and the Silicon Valley technical developments. Both technologies will be in greater demand by a society that will have more leisure time due to the increasing mechanisation of industry.

Attali then sets out his vision of the future power balance in the world around the middle of this century, and some of the countries he sees as power centres are surprising. His rather gloomy forecast of a disintegrating world ecology is paralleled by a decrease in the importance of individual nations as industries migrate to cheaper sources of labour. This could, however, make wars less relevant. He also sees a possible resurgence in religion as a source of political influence, and the growth of pseudo-nation states based on ethnicity. These will be accompanied by much disruption as groups fight for power in their own area.

An interesting point is developed about the migration of industries. Attali sees this accompanied by a “hypernomad” group – the managers, technicians and engineers who will oversee the processes in whatever country they will currently be located in, but who will be expected to follow the migration of the industries as economic circumstances change.

Another interesting point is the need to fund an increasing number of retirees from a reducing workforce. “To maintain the current ratio of active workers to retirees, we must accept either



Jacques Attali

an increase in taxes, in the birthrate, or in immigration”. This will itself be controversial, as many countries which are net importers of workers are already experiencing hostility to immigrants. There will be some interesting balancing acts as governments try to maintain the number of taxpaying workers by immigration in the face of industries that are actively exporting themselves to low labour cost countries.

An increasing amount of the world’s wealth will be concentrated in the hands of a smaller number of people and these, through the corporations they control, will be the true rulers of the world. This may generate hostility if these rich people make the wrong decisions – we are already seeing this in the U.S. as a result of the financial collapse of prominent companies.

To counter this Attali predicts a growth of micro-economic reforms, “solidarity networks”, and other people-friendly ways to attempt to maintain the democratic process. As an outcome of these measures there will be fewer people-unfriendly local wars as the underprivileged try to maintain some sort of living standards in the face of an increasingly hostile climate and economic environment.

Quite early in the book Attali raises some questions which could affect the future of the world and its structure, such as “will poverty and inequalities in wealthy countries become the well-spring for new violence?” and “will genetically modified food or nanotechnologies prove a threat or an opportunity?” and “will religious war once again pit Christianity against Islam?” His predictions, while necessarily still vague in some areas, are disturbing.

The most frightening thing about the book is its plausibility. Attali states them in a clear and understandable form. He is well qualified to make these predictions, although not everyone agrees with them. Even if half the predictions do not come to pass, the remaining ones still make the future look grim. His examination of the current U.S.-based financial crisis that has grown to affect the rest of the world is so close to what has been reported that it is hard to dismiss his views of the future.

Britain's Best Drives

Part 1

2009

Britain

Documentary

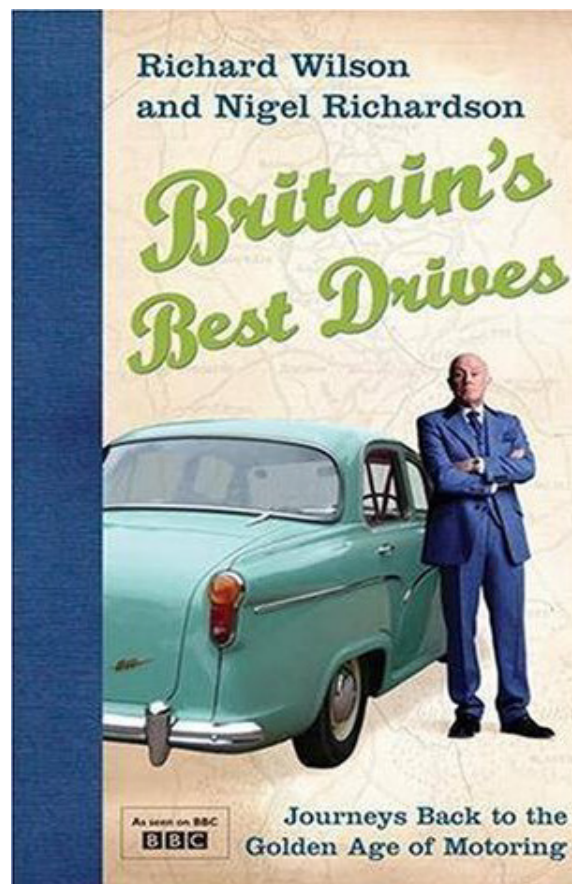
Presented by Richard Wilson

R2 DVD

Acorn Media UK

In the 1950s the war-weary workers of Britain discovered a new pleasure – the motor car touring holiday. With the availability of inexpensive cars like the Morris Minor and Austin A40 and the renovated and superb road network, many parts of Britain were now accessible to city dwellers. A number of guidebooks appeared suggesting the best drives and tourist trips. These were seen as a rather adventurous alternative to the more traditional Butlin's holiday camps or bus trips to the beach. Richard, now in his seventies, has set out to follow some of these recommended trips and to see how much they have changed over the years. Regardless of the changes, there is still a lot of beautiful country left in Britain.

Scarborough to Whitby by Morris Minor . We soon find that Richard and manual gearboxes are natural enemies. One surprising change stands out. Whitby, a rather quaint port town, has attracted large numbers of so-called “Goths” . The young people with their dark makeup and wild hairdos came here because



Whitby was the home of Bram Stoker, the Dracula author, with whom these people identify. A young lad in a Mohawk haircut and heavy boots driving Richard's Morris is definitely a sight to see. One of his new Goth friends quite knowledgeable about the ruins of Whitby Abbey. We also get a brief look at the little town of Goathland, the village that was redecorated as a 1950s town for the BBC TV series Heartbeat and has now become a major tourist trap..

North Wales by Ford Zodiac. The Zodiac was a revelation to the British. Instead of the traditional British conservatism, it was flamboyant, with lots of chrome trim and powerful, with a top speed around 90 miles per hour. Richard starts with a Welsh lesson at Carnarvon Castle, then continues on through the back roads of Wales. It seems to consist of a remarkable amount of rock with bits of land stuck on it. We see the conflict between small villages with narrow streets and the satnav-misguided monster trucks and buses trying to negotiate them.

North Cornish Coast by Volkswagen Camper-van. This trip starts at the little fishing town of St Ives, which in the 50s was an abstract arts center and international destination. It still supports an artist community. It also seems to have one of the nicest beaches in Britain.



Richard Wilson

The trip continues to Lands End through possibly the most beautiful coastal scenery and many more grating gear changes. It also covers the beautiful but harsh Cornish tin mining areas and relics.

The Lakes District. This area is reputed to be one of Britain's wettest areas, so the producers have given Richard a Triumph TR3 convertible. The roof is staying up while ever there is any sign of rain. The gearbox, as usual, gets a punishing. One of Britain's highest inns is scheduled for a lunch stop. With Richard's lack of gear changing ability the steep climb will be a challenge. The beauty of the Lakes drive contrasts with the M6 motorway, which cuts across the area.

Later DVDs in the series will include The Wye Valley by Austin Cambridge and The Scottish Highlands by Bentley

The extras include "Unseen Scenes" (a bit of a misnomer since we are seeing them now). A highlight of this section is the vintage Automobile Association patrolman in full uniform and with motorbike, who discusses the early days of motoring with Richard. He has many memories of the early days of the motorways. The man is a real character and his reminiscences are fascinating. Frankly, the other sections in the Extras are just as good

If there was a disappointment with the series, it was that I would like to have seen a little more on the cars and a little less clashing of gears..

The episodes are set to suitable 1950s music, that cheesy string-based "happy holidays" elevator music, with readings from 1950s touring holiday books. These give a nice period feel to the show. Watchers of the BBC series "Heartbeat" will feel at home.

The Great Digitalization and the Quest to Know Everything

Lucien X Polastron

Inner Traditions 2009

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

This disturbing book is about what Lucien Polastron calls the "dematerialization of knowledge". Traditionally, the world's knowledge is published in book form and held in libraries for access by those who need it. Also traditionally, such knowledge has generally been free for access, apart from copying and shipping costs where necessary. There are alternatives spawned by the computer age, such as Amazon's system that puts the catalogs of booksellers in a single database where users can search for a wanted title.

It is the libraries that concern this book. The costs of maintaining a library is becoming overwhelming, to the point that some libraries are destroying books that are rarely accessed and whose storage is simply too expensive. There are cases where new libraries have been constructed, but by the time space is allocated to ancillary services (cataloging, security, book repair, inter-library loans, etc) there is not enough space to contain the books the library was meant to hold.

Here computers come to the rescue. Many older or less-used texts can be stored in digital format and reprinted as necessary. Amazon and Google Books are leaders in this technology.

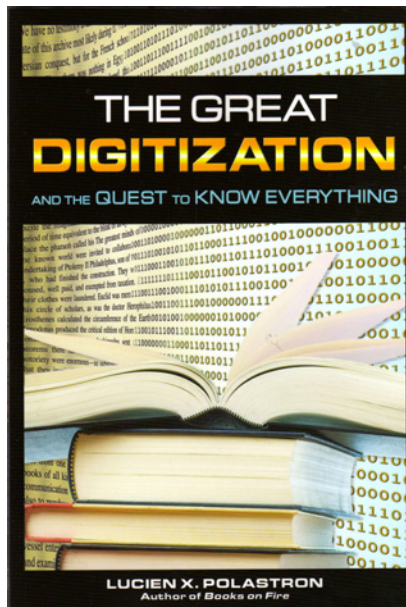
Publications with smaller circulations find this method ideal. In fact, it's the method used by this magazine – Synergy can be downloaded for free as a .pdf file (and used and distributed non commercially without charge) or ordered from the Synergy Lulu Webstore in printed form in your choice of color or black and white.



Web : <http://www.lulu.com/synergymagazine>

As more texts are digitized, Polastron points out that generally the world's knowledge will become more accessible. Up to a point.

It is expensive digitizing old books. The cost of labour is high, and although there are "page-turning" machines, their treatment of the books



may be less than gentle. Storing the final product will also be expensive as the sheer amount of data increases. Nevertheless, many libraries have signed up with Google to have their libraries or a parts thereof digitized. New

books present less of a problem, since they are generally submitted for publication in electronic form anyway.

From a distribution company's point of view the raw material is still very cheap, especially where the books are out of copyright..

"Although Google executives declined to comment on its technology or the cost of the undertaking, others involved estimate the figure at \$10 for each of the more than 15 million books and other documents covered in the agreements (with the libraries)"

Now we face the problem of cataloging the on-line collections, checking their copyright, and compensating the authors. Should the owners of the original books (the libraries) be compensated as well? This are is already causing legal controversy and Polastron gives a number of examples.

With the costs accumulating, the user of these services is now going to have to pay. It may be in the form of popup advertising or a monthly or yearly access fee. While these fees remain inexpensive this model may work, but sooner or later shareholders are going to see subscriptions as a good profit-making exercise.

If the libraries have destroyed their original books due to lack of space, the digital media will now have a monopoly on that knowledge. Is this a good thing?

Finding your information in the new media is not without its problems, either. Users of Google Books will be familiar with its habit of providing

you with a few pages before and after the reference you searched for, but it will not give you the same information on the whole book as browsing through a printed copy can. Again, using this magazine as an example, you may find a group of reviews on a particular genre, but may miss the rest of the content of the magazine which could be just as relevant to your work.

A point of interest that Polastron raises is the sheer difficulty of reading an online text. Once you have paid your fee, downloaded the text, and set it up on your computer, you must keep scrolling down. On a very large monitor you may be able to do this a page at a time. On a smaller one it may take a couple of clicks or scrolls to read each page. Then you will have to cancel those annoying popup ads that will be a part of your contract with the download provider. Reading a printed copy is easier and more convenient, and this is why Polastron thinks the online model may be less successful than print-on-demand.

If you don't like the "pay-for-use" model, what alternatives are there? Polastron examines alternatives like Wikipedia and notes that they can be readily rewritten, altered, or politically biased. This may render much of their content useless for serious research, and the qualifications of the writers are not readily available.

A word of warning – Polastron's writing style is a bit flowery at times, although this may be partly an effect of the translation from French to English. After the first few chapters he settles down a bit, and the bad news emerges more clearly.

Polastron cannot suggest actions to take to correct what may turn out to be a bulk hijacking of the world's knowledge. He seems to feel that it is going to happen anyway in the face of shrinking budgets and unmanageable quantities of books. He makes an interesting point that puts the whole argument into perspective.

Harvard Library estimated the cost of getting a book from the shelves, getting it to the reader, and returning it to the shelves later at around two dollars per loan. Tracking down the book online, printing it, binding it, and GIVING IT AWAY is cheaper when done in library-scale bulk. The future of books and libraries will be interesting.

Heckler (2009)
Stardust Pictures for Canadian Comedy Club
Beyond Home Entertainment
R4 DVD

Web: <http://www.beyondhomentertainment.com>

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

This documentary covers comedy and performances from the other side – the viewpoint of the performer, particularly a comedian named Jamie Kennedy. Why do people heckle performers? What are the effects on the performers? How do they deal with hecklers? The documentary is not just a set of complaints, but a serious attempt to find out how performers handle people who set out to ruin their work.

"Why don't you make like a Kennedy and die young?"

"Get off now, Fatty, or I'll kill your whole family"

"Please get off the stage now and leave. Just please leave now" (that was the MC)

"They want you outside". "Who?" "The people inside."

Although a lot of hecklers are just drunk and full of their own importance, there are also the ones who heckle on behalf of political correctness, who find the show boring, and even according to one comic as a means of flirting. One comedienne who attended a show commented that she felt she just had to participate somehow and heckling was her outlet.

Some performers can handle a heckler, but sometimes it gets nasty.

(US comedian in Canada) What do you do with all the ugly people here?

(Heckler) We ship them to America

(Comedian) Well, sorry, you missed one.

(Comedienne) Are you talkin'?

(Heckler) Yes

(Comedienne) It's not like TV, bitch. When you talk, I can hear you.

For a performer examining a show in retrospect, the ultimate downer is realizing you lost control of the show to the point that security had to be called to eject the heckler.

Overall, putting the heckler on stage and taking away their anonymity seems to work best, but comedians have been assaulted when they did this.

From here the show moves to that ultimate heckler, the film critic. They are almost universally hated by performers, to the point that one film producer challenged his critics to a series of boxing matches, which he won. Performers feel that critics are not always in touch, and often show an unreasoning hostility.

"The guys that masturbate to Meryl Streep – they send those guys to review us."

"The lady who was sent to review the movie just started into reviewing my face and my body"

"...too much of their ego"

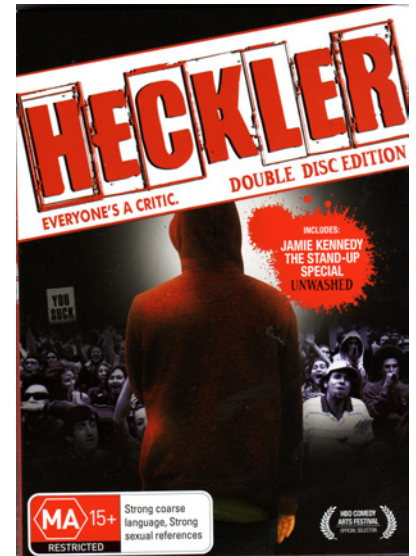
The anonymity of the Internet concerns performers. A critical comment on one of the many blogs or websites generally cannot be answered. A critic's qualifications to make that comment cannot be examined.

"Am I going to see a movie, based on the opinion of serialkiller666 ?

People focus on the flaws, and the good points are rarely noted. Examples are given where critics have thoroughly trashed a film, yet it went on to become a major seller or renter. Quite simply, the critics are often wrong but very rarely admit it. Do critics and hecklers just love to inflict pain?

We will leave the final words to Winston Churchill. One night in Parliament he was a bit under the influence and a lady Parliamentarian heckled him "Mr Churchill, you are drunk". He replied "And you, Madam, are ugly. But in the morning I shall be sober".

It is probably important to restate Synergy's policy here. We are REVIEWERS, not critics. There are enough good films out there that we can generally ignore the less effective ones.



There are exceptions. Sometimes a film is so dreadfully bad that it is funny (Plan 9 from Outer Space) or so quirky that it is worth a look because it is different (Action Girls - no plot, no acting, but who cares? That's not what it's about).

Generally we will try to give you a synopsis, the film's context, and a brief idea of how much we liked it. You, the viewer, then become the critic if you decide to buy it or watch it based on our recommendation.

The second DVD in the set is Jamie Kennedy Unwashed. This is a film of his show in San Jose. Although his style is fairly conventional American humour, he is obviously relating to the audience and heckling is not really a problem. He is skilled at using his face and his voice to add to his performance. He started off rather slowly, but managed to get the audience on side early in the act and from there they appeared to enjoy it.

This DVD is a worthwhile addition to the title film, because it shows how a skilled performer can work with his audience.

Inside the Third Reich

2009

Germany

English, and German with white subtitles over picture.

R1 DVD

A Spiegel TV production in association with History Television Canada

Directed by Michael Kloft and Lutz Hackmeister

Distributed by First Run Features

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

This impressive set includes large amounts of new footage, and war footage I have never seen before. It covers some of the areas previously only lightly explained in earlier documentaries and is the result of a lot of research and new material and sources being unearthed.

The Reich Underground

As the war turned against Germany, its leaders decided to move much of their production underground into huge caverns dug deep into the mountains. Some are still in use today by the German Army. Others were closed off except for



regular inspection. Part One of this documentary largely follows Max Kabe of the Department of Mines Safety who checks the old tunnels and knows their dangers. In many tunnels the rock was never shored up. Others are flooded or the timber shoring has rotted away. Some old boreholes in unfinished tunnels (and most of them are unfinished) still have blasting charges in them.

There are poignant reminders of the war years in the abandoned tunnels – jet engines, a row of rocket motors. Hundreds of thousands of internees were diverted to the construction from the death camps. Max Mannheimer, a survivor, describes his experience at a 6-story aircraft production installation – three stories were underground. The huge concrete portal over the entrance to the tunnels is impressive, but it was smashed in by bunkerbuster bombs. 200,000 internees died on this installation alone. Life expectation was only 60 – 80 days. He weighed 37 kilos at liberation. He was lucky – other internees were sent to Dachau.

One of the largest of the tunnel systems was never used and even the local people don't know how big it was. Mostly unfinished, there is a huge risk of falling rocks. It was to be for manufacture of BMW aero engines. Mittelwerk-Dora near Nordhausen in the Harz mountains was for building V2 rockets. The cold and humidity in the tunnels led to tuberculosis outbreaks among the slave workers.

Although parts of the huge complex are opened for tourists, most remains closed for safety. There is good footage of the earliest V2 launches, a history of V2 tactics, and details of the launching and construction of launch bunkers. Northern France has one of the war's largest V2 bunkers. It could store 500 missiles and was topped by a 55,000 ton 5-metre thick cupola covering a 15 metre high assembly hall. British bombers used 12,000 pound Tallboy bombs to bust the bunker. An interesting one is the Mimoyecques bunker, also in France, designed to fire the V3 "England Cannon" shells.

At Falkenhagen near Berlin a huge poison gas factory was being built for IG Farben.. Mustard Gas and Hydrocyanic Acid were to be produced, as well as a new terror – the nerve gas Sarin was developed here. Production was personally ordered by Hitler, and was intended to reach 500 tonnes/month – enough to wipe out a city. Fortunately the factory was not completed and Sarin never went into production.

Part Two deals with the non-industrial tunnels and city air raid shelter complexes. The Eben-see tunnel complex was to be an underground HQ for the Luftwaffe, but was never used for this. It was converted to engine factories, but the map shows the huge nature of the intended project. In Poland another underground town for 29,000 people was planned and begun, but never finished. It was to be an emergency headquarters for Hitler.

Huge complexes of air raid shelters were built in the main cities – the biggest surviving one is in Dortmund. Tunnel building continued up to the end of the war as the shelters proved inadequate for the population. Some still exist as they were left in 1945. Berlin was to feature an underground highway system that could also be used as shelters – some are in use today as the Unterlinden.

Goebbels' private bunker was discovered under his villa in 1998 during building work. Bunkers under Berchtesgaden, Hitler's home at Obersalzberg, are explored for the first time in decades. Another large but unfinished complex, 6km long, includes a very deep SS bunker. Construction was organized by Martin Bormann. It was attacked by US bombers, which may explain why it was never used. Martin Bormann's private bunker under his home, guarded by machinegun posts, can only be entered now by special permit. This documentary contains what may be the only film footage existing of the well-

finished bunker. Hitler barricaded himself and his remaining followers into the bunker under the Reichschancellery and committed suicide when he realized finally that the war was lost.. The documentary has rare footage of the bunker.

Exploration of salt mines found the accumulated loot of the Reich, hidden in hundreds of kilometers of old tunnels. It was found by U.S. soldiers on advice from some of the slave workers who survived the digging of the tunnels.

Firestorm

Over 1 million bombs were dropped on Germany during the war. Mass bombing was directed against civilians, just as the bombing of Rotterdam was directed against the Dutch and later the Blitz was against British civilians. Its intention was to demoralise civilians and overload refugee resources. The need for such warfare is still debated today, and is discussed in the documentary. Precision bombing was crude, and often a large part of a city was leveled to get a single factory complex anyway. Factories simply moved into the country or underground. This encouraged the growth of city-wide bombing as an alternative. The basis of the bombing was that "dehousing" people took them away from the factories and towns, depriving the industries of their workforce.

Development of British bombers and bombing/marking techniques versus the development of the German fighter guidance system is covered in some detail. It is interesting that some German air raid shelters exist today, too well built to demolish economically. Arthur "Bomber" Harris organized the "moral bombing" of cities, knowing the old wooden city centers would burn well and set fire to the surrounding worker suburbs. Development of the small incendiary bomb allowed this weapon to be used for destruction out of proportion to the bomb's size. 300,000 incendiary bombs were dropped on Hamburg – it was regarded as a highly successful raid. This, the first Firestorm, killed 35,000 people.

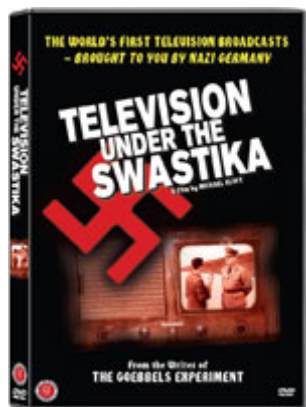
Germany tried to hold on until the V-weapons could come on line and wreak retaliation on London. Tales of the survivors show a fatalism, and they asked themselves if they would ever be able to enjoy a quiet life again. Over 100 shot down Allied pilots and crew were lynched by Germans. Yet in the end firestorm bombing did not wear down German morale enough to

stop them resisting the invasion. After five years of bombing, supplies were still flowing to the Wehrmacht. Germans got the V2 flying at last – too little, too late. Several thousand V2s hit Britain and 35,000 people were killed. Bombing of German cities continued but there is argument over whether this now represented a strategic weapon or simply revenge. In the spring of 1945 Dresden, ignored until now, was bombed on the excuse that it was a center of resistance against the advancing Russians. Thousands were killed. The city was still burning 24 hours later. Remaining attacks had no strategic value whatever. Swinemunde, a Baltic port filled with 22,000 people and an unknown number of refugees, was bombed by 100 bombers at Russian request. 15,000 died. It was an evacuation port, but had no military value. Germany would not surrender, so it was punished.

Television under the Third Reich

Since 1935 the first public TV broadcast in the world was going out from the Paul Nipkow studios in Berlin. 285 rolls of film were recently found in the Berlin National Film Archives. They were restored and copied, and some of the results appear in this documentary. They contain propaganda, entertainment, and news (called Topical Events or Topical Picture Broadcasting). They developed outside broadcasts, and later broadcast direct, but most were shot onto 35mm film and broadcast later. TV was something of a propaganda victory for Germany, but this documentary shows that they never used its possibilities to the fullest extent.

TV looked a little primitive compared with, say, Leni Riefenstahl's carefully set up films. Broadcast commentary was more like radio broadcasting. The film had long shots, with little cutting and editing. Quality was not great. Most entertainment was performances by leading radio personalities. Propaganda songs fitted well into the format. There were very few TV sets, mostly owned by technicians and party officials. Some public "television parlours" were available and proved popular. The TV sets needed constant careful adjustment. The 1936 Summer Olympics spurred interest.



More parlours opened, better cameras were built, careful presentation and better narration were introduced. Vision at the Olympics was fed from the camera to a truck where it was transferred to film, developed instantly, then fed into a transmitter, all in less than a minute. It was something of a technical showpiece in spite of its underdeveloped status.

Programming matured, showing more of the German social infrastructure and daily life. News shared time with cooking shows, interviews with Party personalities, womens shows, sports, hunter's conventions "for the animals know that the hunters are their best friends" and, of course, Nazi parades. There was no critical journalism, though. Propaganda was becoming stronger on the new medium, although the Party still did not see much use for it. The documentary shows an early anti-Bolshevism exhibition, Goebbels railing against the Jews, and the Nuremberg rallies. 1936 saw the rally transmitted live, but still backed up to film. The quality of the sound and vision is remarkably good on the cleaned-up film. By 1937 they were broadcasting up to four hours per day (which included a lot of reruns). The search for content led to a lot of odd footage, such as on fish breeding, and this gives a snapshot of German life at the time. It is this that makes the archive particularly valuable.

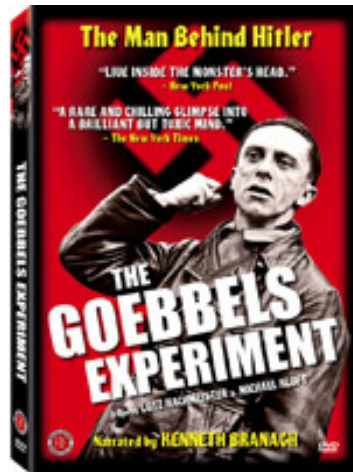
The outbreak of war meant fewer resources to expand TV set production. Programming was more propaganda oriented. The first mention of "anthropological and race experiments" slipped into one documentary. Programming now included helpful hints for the hausfrau – how to make old clothes last for longer, cooking around shortages, home gardening and preserving of vegetables. There was no direct war footage, but communiqués and reports were inserted in the news. In spite of this, interest in TV was waning at an official level. To get themselves reclassified as an essential industry, the company turned to entertaining the troops. Eleven military hospitals were wired up for TV. A strong propaganda element crept in to convince the convalescing troops that everything was well in the German world. They also broadcast in France which had a thriving TV industry of its own. It became harder to broadcast as the towers became targets for bombers. Poignantly, one of the last pieces of film in the documentary is a motivational talk to help legless soldiers make the most of their life. A young couple dancing : "So you've had both legs amputated?" "Yes, life is wonderful"

The Goebbels Experiment

This very personal documentary follows the life of Josef Goebbels through the entries in his diaries. They show his relationship with Hitler, and give a picture of a lonely boy who found in Hitler a hero he could worship. Goebbels was a sickly child with a damaged foot. He became a solitary boy. He read a lot, including Hitler and other revolutionaries, and started to become anti-semitic. He developed as an effective orator for the National Socialist Party, which he found satisfying. He met Hitler, came to like him, and came to believe in his political ideals. His contact with Hitler got him a job with the Party as an orator and meeting organizer.

After studying Sergei Eisenstein's *Ten Days That Shook The World*, Goebbels took an interest in propaganda. This marked the beginning of a long period of internal conflict, highs and lows, as his career advanced and declined. In 1929 he was promoted to head of propaganda in Munich, a post he didn't want as he thought he was being pushed out of the power center in Berlin. He saw this as a loss of interest in him by Hitler, but continued to do his best. As the Nazi party started to win elections, his morale improved. He moved back to Berlin and started to become the face of the Party, introducing Hitler at many public rallies. In Berlin he was undermined by the SA and Himmler, who were seeking their own power. With Hitler's rise to political power he found himself sidelined again – he had hoped to become Minister for Broadcasting. Once again he lost faith in Hitler. By 1933 his propaganda expertise was becoming noticed internationally, a matter which gave him some pride. He reorganized the Ministries' opinion makers to remove those he thought were less effective. He also started to give voice to his anti-semitic campaign. He was in his element organising the huge public spectacle rallies and parades. His fondness for his wife and children shows through in many diary entries.

The Minister for Propaganda position was becoming vacant, but once again it looked as if he



may miss out. He still acted, though, as if he was already Minister. Infidelities discovered by his wife led to depression. He got back to work with anti-Jewish demonstrations, which seemed to lift his spirits somewhat. He also had to hold the Press in check while waiting for the invasion of England. He expressed admiration for Goering's handling of the air battle, in spite of previously calling Goering an oaf and a cocaine addict.

In 1941 everything was ready for the invasion of Russia and he prepared many speeches to justify the action. Goebbels certainly enjoyed the power, travelling around the growing German empire, but he still found time to wish Berlin could be made Jew-free. Around this time he spent a lot of his time developing propaganda in the German cinema industry.

Goebbels respected Churchill's ability to do what he himself was doing, but he had nothing but contempt for the Reich Press Officer, Dietrich, who was already speaking of success in the East in spite of the facts. Goebbels' speeches were increasingly important to keep the German people wanting the "Total War" Hitler promised them, in spite of the sacrifices it would mean. This role became critical as air raids on German cities intensified, and supercritical as entire towns became firestorm targets. By the end of 1943 his diary entries showed pessimism creeping in. June 7, 1944, D-Day, saw him optimistic about repulsing the landing, although it appears he was not properly informed of the extent of the invasion or the inadequate preparations – in fact he seems to have been under the influence of his own propaganda. He was also overenthusiastic about the effects of the V weapons on the British. He noted that the Germans were now starting to want the truth, not glossy propaganda, and perhaps it was time to give it to them.

The realities of the Russian advance were getting closer to Berlin and the front was now only a few days from Berlin. Goebbels was still promoting Total War, although by now he appeared to be talking as much to convince himself as the German troops. Was he losing touch with reality? Even as the Russians were in Berlin's suburbs, he was plotting revenge against a man in his old home town who was collaborating with the Americans. He continued making speeches until the end. This came in the main bunker under the Reichs Chancellery.

He, his wife and children took poison, and his body was partly burnt.

I cannot praise this documentary set enough. It covers important details of the war that have been ignored before and makes best use of the recently rediscovered sources. The underground scenes are powerful and must have been achieved at some risk to the cameraman and crew. The use of Goebbels' diaries gives an insight into a man who was there almost from the start. The quantity and quality of rare or unpublished footage is impressive, giving a total length of over six hours. This set deserves a place on your shelf.

A Jihad for Love First Run Features R1 DVD

Filmmaker Sandi Dubowski has always tried to understand the nuances of the relationship between religion and sexuality. Some years ago he released **Trembling before G-d** which was a truly eye opening look at Orthodox Judaism and homosexuality. This time, in conjunction with director Parvez Sharma, he decides to explore the explosive subject of homosexuality and Islam.

Jihad for Love was filmed in 12 different countries and in nine languages. Sharma conducted interviews throughout North America, Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Countries included Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Egypt, Bangladesh, Turkey, France, India, South Africa, the United States and the United Kingdom. He found many of his interviewees online, and received thousands of emails.

It took him six years to complete the film with many of the subjects appearing with some fear of reprisals and violence.

His approach has been to throw the net as wide as possible and offer an overview of the experience of lesbians and gays under Islam. So many of these stories are confronting and terrifying, for example, an Egyptian is imprisoned and tortured for two years before seeking asylum in France and yet still lives in fear. Four Iranian men live in Turkey while anxiously awaiting word on whether they will be accepted as politi-



Four Iranian refugees share a painful moment in A Jihad for Love

cal refugees in Canada.

At the same time we are also presented with more tolerant and open Muslims and we come to understand that there is a different approach within, at least some, aspects of the community.

While many westerners will shy from the term Jihad relating it to acts of terrorism or violence. The term simply means struggle. Within Islam the lesser struggle or Jihad is that which occurs outside (i.e. between us and others), while the greater struggle is that which occurs within. A Jihad for Love is hence the holy struggle to find the right to express love as we find it.

While the majority of Muslims believe that homosexuality is forbidden by the Qur'an, and many scholars quote Hadith (sayings attributed to the Prophet Muhammad) to condemn homosexuality, there is still much debate. Islam is in many ways a bit like Christianity in the 1950's just coming to terms with scholarship about the origins of the Koran and its social mores.

Sadly while very well received in Western film festivals Muslim countries have been uncomfortable with the content. For example, it was banned from the 2008 Singapore Film Festival.

The only criticism is that this doco tends to focus on personal experiences to the extent that the effect of their message becomes diluted.

I would have liked to see extensive coverage of the history of homosexuality in Islam and Koranic scholarship as a counter balance to the personal interviews. But this is a trifle, this is a groundbreaking documentary and certainly a welcome addition to the arsenal of weapons we have against intolerance.

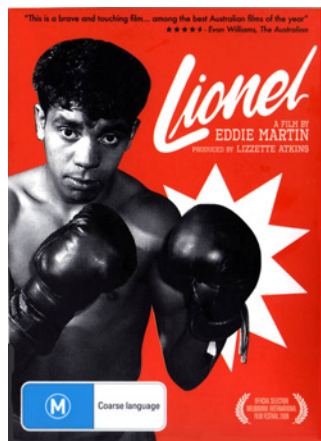
Lionel
R0 PAL DVD
Siren Visual

Reviewer:
Bob Estreich

Lionel Rose is an aboriginal Australian from the little town of Drouin in Victoria. There would not have been much future for him there, but his talent was noted and he was teamed up with a local trainer who taught him to box.

Lionel started to build up his reputation and made it to the point that he could challenge for the World Championship. In 1968 he beat Japanese boxer "Fighting Harada" on points in a fifteen-round battle in Tokyo and won the Bantamweight World Championship. He became a champion to Australians, and particularly to Aboriginal kids who saw him as a role model.

Lionel Rose



Australia at the time was just beginning to come out of a long racist period, and Rose's victories did a lot to advance the cause of his people and give them some self-pride. Football does much the same at present. White Australians were just as proud of him, though.

The peak of his performance passed quickly, however, and by the time he was twenty two it was all over. As he grew older his weight increased, and moving up to Featherweight class put him up against a new group of more experienced boxers. After a couple of lost matches, Rose retired disillusioned.

A brief singing career followed, but didn't go past a couple of fairly successful songs. The legend of the boxing hero wasn't enough to sustain him, and his life degenerated into alcohol, some petty crimes and personal problems. His wife divorced him.

Then something of a miracle happened. Charles Perkins, head of the Aboriginal Affairs Department and aboriginal himself, sought out Rose and employed him in a part-time capacity to open a string of new Youth Clubs that the Government was establishing. These were designed to give kids somewhere to go and something to do, and to teach them sports like boxing.

The Government needed a strong public figure to promote these centers. Lionel Rose found that he had not been forgotten. He was still a hero to all these kids and their parents. He was still seen as a role model – he had dragged himself up from very humble beginnings and made something of himself, and Australians appreciated and respected that. It gave him a new try at life, one which he adopted eagerly.

His life now consists of such PR work, although he has slowed down since a mild stroke. His wife has rejoined him and his life is back on track. In this film he looks back on his history. He is honest about it and it is easy to sympathize with a young lad from a bush town whose success nearly ruined him.

The extras disk includes full footage of four major fights of Lionel and his major competitors. Although the film is aimed mainly at boxing fans, it is as well a good history of the problems of fame.

Web: <http://www.sirenvisual.com.au>

Solo
Documentary
Hopscotch Films
2008
R4 DVD

Reviewer:
Bob Estreich

Solo is produced and directed by David Michod, Jennifer Peedom of Essential Media Entertainment for ABC Australia.



Andrew McAulay set out in 2006 to cross the Tasman Sea from Tasmania to Milford Sound in New Zealand, a trip of around 1000 kilometres, across a part of the Great Southern Ocean notorious for its savage weather. Many around-the-world solo yachtsmen have come to grief in these waters. Andrew was going to do the crossing in a kayak. He was never seen again. This film is the story of his fatal trip.

Andrew was a self-styled adventurer. From the photos shown in the film, he tried mountaineering, kayaking, and many other of the so-called "extreme" sports. He had already crossed by kayak from mainland Australia to Tasmania, and paddled across the Gulf of Carpentaria, but he was still relatively inexperienced in ocean kayaking.

There is a big difference between a day's mountaineering on land, where a rescue service with helicopters is just a phone call away, and long distance kayaking in an isolated area out of reach of rescue planes. Although people talk about "the thrill of the adventure" and "finding their limits", what happens when the thrill wears off or you exceed your limits? Andrew had already made one abortive attempt to New Zealand and turned back on the second day suffering from hypothermia. From the film clips he took on the kayak, he may not have been mentally strong enough to face such a trip either.

His second attempt was driven by the news that a couple of young kayakers were going to try to paddle from Australia to New Zealand, setting off from New South Wales and crossing a safer, better-trafficked area of the Tasman Sea. He was a little better prepared this time. The kayak had a fiberglass hood fitted over the sleeping

compartment, and much was made of the fact that when clipped in place the air trapped in it would right the kayak if it capsized. Little was made of the other point, that it had to be left open to paddle the canoe. If the canoe was swamped by a wave or capsized while the canopy was not in place, the kayak would fill with water and sink like a rock. Against the advice of the Australian Marine Safety Centre and the Tasmanian Water Police, he set out again.

Once again the surviving film shows that Andrew was suffering psychologically. The trip would take about a month, but he was complaining about the hardship and being cold, wet and scared within a few days. He wondered if he was going to make it. This was in fine weather, but soon enough he encountered the storms for which the area is notorious. He was out of contact for a few days, but resumed radio contact after the storm.

He appears to have been within sight of the New Zealand coast when something happened. A garbled radio message was received by the New Zealand Rescue Coordination Centre saying that he was out of the kayak, which was sinking. He called an emergency and asked for help. Although they sent out a search aircraft that night, nothing was found. A more intense search was mounted the next day and Andrew's capsized kayak was found within 30 kilometres of Milford Sound. There was no sign of him. The search continued for some days, but with no luck.

The film is a study of the effects on the survivors, as well as a documentary of the trip. It offers no explanation about why Andrew would take on a trip he was obviously mentally unqualified for. He appears to have had little consideration for the effects his death would have on his young family, or who would foot the bill for the massive and costly search and rescue. Giving it a grand name like the "TransTasman Kayak Expedition" does not excuse the project's defects.

Was Andrew foolishly overconfident? Criminally stupid? A selfish publicity seeker? Form your own opinion, but I cannot help but compare him with the suicidal idiots in *Hella Crazy*, a film about juvenile stunts reviewed in this magazine some time ago. The only difference I can see is that Andrew was old enough to know better and should have had more common sense.

Where in the World is Osama Bin Laden ? 2008

Director Morgan Spurlock
Icon Film Distribution
R4 DVD

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

After his rather ridiculous attack on McDonalds (Supersize Me) Morgan Spurlock now decides to try to find Osama bin Laden. His theory is that he wants to make the world a safer place for his unborn child, but with no expertise whatever he seems doomed to failure before he begins. The film does have some interesting outcomes, however. By letting the people of many countries tell their stories of religious intolerance in their own words, he brings out some points that Americans should take notice of.

The United States is not a popular country. Many see it as trying to dominate the world. Others see it as developing wars in their country when all the people want is a quiet life. One Moslem makes an interesting point. He says that Osama bin Laden could not successfully fight a war in the United States, so he has brought the U.S. out into Moslem countries where a war can be waged on their home grounds. Spurlock is put in his place when he tries to convince an Afghani that the United States entered Afghanistan to establish peace. The old man asks gently "Did you come in an ambulance or a tank?"

Spurlock tries to get to the bottom of the human bomb terrorist phenomenon, and he is told that people are attracted to these organizations because they have nothing else in their lives – no education, no job, no prospects of getting one. They simply have nothing to lose.

On the other side of the argument are the partly educated people who will interpret the Koran or the Talmud to their own political advantage, and the similarity with looney fundamental Christians is unmistakable. It is not only the Christians and Moslems who show their own petty stupidities, either. In a fundamentalist Jewish neighbourhood in Jerusalem he is shoved and abused simply for trying to ask people in the area if they could answer some questions for him. Note that he does not get to ask any questions – just being asked if they will talk to him is enough to excite a frenzy of abuse, and he must be rescued by a policeman.

There are few voices of reason. A Saudi Ara-

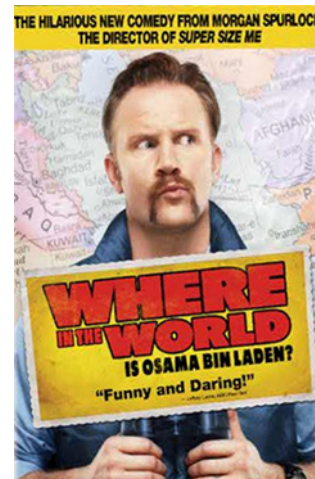
bian academic suggests that religious people are simply unsuited to run a country. They have no training in the administrative matters needed, and he feels that there should be a clear dividing line between religion and politics. He makes the point that the most peaceful Moslem countries are those in

which Islam is kept in its place and not in the Government. In the same country Spurlock asks what senior students have been taught about the United States, and cannot get anything but a non-committal answer. When he asks what they have been taught about Jews, the interview is abruptly terminated. It appears that even in the more stable countries some topics may not be talked about, making it hard for young people to form an educated opinion. In spite of this, though, most ordinary people in most countries are willing to comment and their comments are much the same – leave us alone to get on with our lives. Help us rebuild our countries. Help us educate our children.

It would have been interesting if he had asked similar questions in America's Deep South, where unreasoning religious belief is just as strong and just as irrational. It seems that all the major religions have their share of power-seekers and mindless believers.

As he moves closer to Pakistan, believed to be where bin Laden is holed up (if he is still alive), the quest becomes more dangerous. In Afghanistan he is kitted up for combat, just to enter a local village which is regarded as friendly. The villagers ARE friendly and hospitable. Their biggest complaint is that since a well was drilled to supply the nearby military camp, they have been suffering water shortages from their own wells. This is not how to win friends. They don't care about the Taliban, the U.S., or bin Laden. They just need water.

Spurlock finally abandons his pointless quest at the entrance to Pakistan's Tribal Regions. As a foreigner he is not allowed in, as a father-to-be he just wants to get home for the birth of his baby. The film as it stands is rather trivial, but it offers some useful insights into a worldwide problem from the "other side".



The Wonder of It All
2007
Indican Pictures
R1 DVD
USA
Director Jeff Roth
Writer Stephen Roth

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

On the 40th Anniversary of man stepping onto the moon, this DVD gives a summary of the lead up and success of the twelve men who actually walked on the moon.

The story is told by the astronauts themselves, Buzz Aldrin, Alan Bean, Gene Cernan, Charlie Duke, Edgar Mitchell, Harrison Schmitt, and John Young. Their words give the history a uniquely personal viewpoint.

The early astronauts were selected from the best pilots available - military and test pilots. Alan Shepherd's first flight into space (he didn't even get to orbit the earth) was an inspiration to many of them. They set out to gain qualifications that would help them get a place on the program.

Despite President Kennedy's assertion that they would now go to the moon, at this point they knew surprisingly little about actually getting into space.

Buzz Aldrin Steps on the Moon



"I believe that this nation should commit itself, to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth."

Missions such as the Apollo series and Skylab were planned many years in advance, but the selection process for mission crews was a bit of a mystery. Gradually the crews fell into place and the technology improved. They were not "brave" men – one says they were really rather naïve, but well aware of the risks.

This tended to make them cautious, but their pilot training had made them aware of how quickly a problem could arise and how quickly you had to respond. Charlie Duke points out that eight men were killed during training, but these were mostly due to ordinary accidents like a plane or car crash.

The loss of the three astronauts Gus Grissom, Ed White and Roger Chaffee) in the Apollo 1 fire in January 1967 was a tragedy to the crews, but work continued.

With every accident, every flaw discovered, the program became just that little bit safer.

As the succession of missions reached their goals, it was announced that Apollo 11 would have the task of landing on the moon.

The “wave off” of the first landing attempt was a huge blow, but the second attempt, the one that had the whole world watching, succeeded.



Moonwalk

For the astronauts, the moment that the engines were turned off seemed to be the moment they realized what they had done. Now they had to get home.

With a car, it is when you try to restart an engine that the troubles begin. In spite of this, the reactions of the men to their historic landing seems to have been muted.

There was a lot of work to be done and a timetable to be followed.

There was a certain amount of lightheartedness, but basically they tried to get back onto their crowded timeline to achieve as much as possible in the time available.

“...this was something that was real, but it lacked a good bit of reality”

“It had a serenity to it...”

“How could something so desolate be so magnificent?”

They were concerned about the rock samples they had to gather. They were fighter pilots, not geologists, and there was concern that they may pick up the wrong rocks.

The very fine moon dust got everywhere, including inside the module, and they were covered with a thin coat of dust for the rest of the trip.

The human touches were important to the astronauts – the first golf shot, Charlie Duke's family photo that he left on the moon. Eugene Cernan recalls that he would have liked to stop time for a while as he climbed the ladder back into the module before takeoff. The realization of what they had done only hit them when they were in quarantine after their safe return to Earth.

“...it's all over – now what are you going to do for the rest of your life?”

They became a senator, an artist, a teacher, an engineer ... in many cases their Apollo Mission history helped get them started, but they were mostly strong personalities and succeeded in their fields by their own efforts. The spiritual side affected each man in different ways, some quite deeply.



Gene Cernan NASA

“I think we were modern day explorers. It's in the nature of man to explore..”

MAGAZINES



Bite Me

**The Journal of the Vampire and It's Kin
Issue #20**

Web: <http://www.bitememagazine.com/>

If you like vampires, the supernatural and things that go bump in the night, Bite me is the magazine for you. The first thing that hits you when you see Bite Me is its mixture of a high aesthetic style with solid content. It looks great and has a sensuous feel of the dark and gothic. It also offers the highest quality printing, beautiful photography, scrumptious colours and stunning covers.

At the same time it is not one of these magazines which is all "style over substance", it is literally packed with features as well as regular sections and reviews.

In Issue 20, for example, there is a marvellous article on Mistaken Dracula's which rather than focusing on the great cinema bloodsuckers, shows us the worst ! This is followed by a very well researched article on the Arab horse and its relation to the Celestial Horse of legend.

Then there is a short but reflective article on the struggle of New Orleans to get back on its feet after the disaster of Katrina.

Page 20 moves to a more visual presentation with a beautiful Vamp Gallery followed by a feature on the world's only Gothic Lolita band, RazorBladeKisses. (There is lots of visual treats throughout the magazine as well !)

This is following by some features of a more paranormal bent including one where some Canadian ghost hunters spend the night in the Edinburgh Vaults, the most haunted place in Britain.

There is a lot more including Gothic fiction, an interview and art feature on Anne Sudworth, news items, reviews and even a nice article on dark dolls and puppets.



Critically examining Bite Me I find it balances the dark and the erotic, style with substance, vampires with other dark trends. Interviews news and general information are carefully integrated with insightful but highly entertaining feature articles.

There is advertising but it does not overpower the magazine and is relevant. Bite Me is a close to perfect dark magazine !

The website is definitely worth a visit. There is lots of goodies including a free online newsletter and a store stocking some truly cool back issues !

There is also a chat forum, ghost stories and more.

The Color Ink Book Volume One

The Color Ink Book is a very different sort of art magazine/book. Indeed I have not seen another one like it on the market. The essence of The Color Ink Book is that it is a Do It Yourself (DIY) quarterly periodical, showcasing mainstay artists, alongside newcomers, in grayscale print.



This creates the interesting possibility of the reader adding their own color if they are feeling creative, thus fusing artist and art enthusiast. It literally is an interactive art magazine !

In an overwhelmingly digital age, we believe it is important to keep art in print (on recycled paper of course), mobile and engaging. The heart of Color Ink Book is to chronicle the current art movement through works, not words.

Issue Number One features art from the likes of: Abe Lincoln Jr., Annie Owens, Anthony Ausgang, Aya Kakeda, Brandon Dunlap, Bubi Au Yeung, Erik Otto, +Eyeformation+, Graham Roumieu, Hannah Stouffer, Heiko Müller, Jim Mahfood, John Martz, Judith Drews, Julie West, Matthew Elliot, Merav Merav, Sara Antoinette Martin, Stuart Kolakovic, Trevor Van Meter, Trevor Zammit and many more.

It is over 100 pages in length with colour covers.

Web: <http://www.colorinkbook.com/>

Film International Volume 7 No 1 Issue 37

First published in 1973 Film International has developed into the voice of erudite film criticism.

Published bi-monthly it is a full colour magazine with a strongly European feel.

Film International covers all aspects of film culture in a visually dynamic way. This new breed of film publication brings together established

film scholars with renowned journalists to provide an informed and animated commentary on the spectacle of world cinema.

Balancing reviews, extensive film criticism and film journalism Film International is very informative and challenging film magazine.



A free pdf copy of Issue 37 is available at the Intellect Books website.

Web: <http://www.filmint.nu/>

Intellect Books

Web:

[http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals.php?](http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals.php?issn=16516826)
[issn=16516826](http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals.php?issn=16516826)



Juxtapoz 100th Issue

The Special 100th Issue will be on newsstands soon, featuring Raymond Pettibon, Spike Jonze, Camile Rose Garcia, Coop, Glen E Friedman, and Kevin Ancell, as well as retrospectives on Barry McGee, Banksy, Mark Ryden, David Choe, Robert Williams, Tim Biskup, Miss Van, Shag, Doze Green, Margaret Kilgallen, Shepard Fairey, CR Stecyk III, Kenny Scharf, Phil Frost, Liz McGrath, Clayton Brothers, and Ron English.

Web: <http://www.juxtapoz.com>

Morpheus Tales Issue #IV

Morpheus Tales is once again an impressive mixture of fiction, interviews and dark art with a small selection of reviews and news items.

Beautifully presented with an exotic cover it features some thrilling horror tales, each one illustrated in differing styles and presentations.

This balance of fiction, art and interviews makes Morpheus Tales an excellent read.

Stories include Off The Hook by Michael Laimo, illustrated by matlocktheartist.

Vampires Suck by Lyn Cannaday, illustrated By Ash Arceneaux.

The Ghost's Compact by Norman A. Rubin Page, illustrated by Douglas E. Draper Jr.

Under the Placenta Tree by Mark Zirbel illustrated by John Hempstead.

Bloody Kisses: Blood Rose by Christian McPhate, illustrated by Jasper Smithers.

Soap Sally by Randy Young, illustrated by Zak Greene.

Prelude by Garon Cockrell, illustrated by Chris Heady.

Epitaph For Sol by Tommy B. Smith, illustrated by Christopher Lee Stine.

Night Song By Bill Ward Page, illustrated By Mark Bell.

Interviews with Christopher Golden and Gareth L. Powell.

Back issues are also still available.

Morpheus Tales

Web: <http://www.morpheustales.com>



Straight to Hell The Manhattan Review of Unnatural Acts

Straight to Hell is a legend in the world of male erotica.

Straight to Hell: The Manhattan Review of Unnatural Acts (Aka The New York Review of Cocksuck-ing) was conceived

and founded by cult writer Boyd McDonald in the early 1970s. Even though he died in 1993 at the age of 68 Straight to Hell has continued unabated until today and is now at issue 66.

It is an unusual magazine as it still continues much as it began; mixing radical political, explicit sexuality, one handed personal stories and incisive humour and wit.

It has continued to be an underground voice for honest and uncensored sexuality without the political correctness and niceties that pass for journalism in the wider "gay" community.

The simple concept of Straight to Hell remains unchanged: via a New York City P.O. box readers are invited to send their accounts of true sexual experiences to the editor.

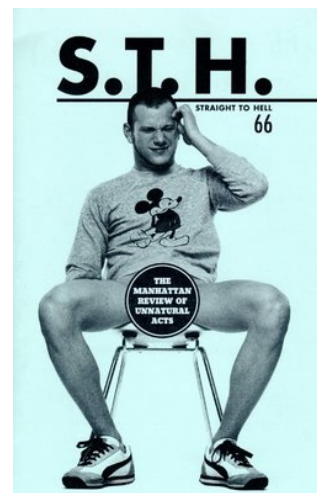


The resulting magazines (and small books such as Meat, Filth, Flesh, and Raunch) represent a diverse library of bizarre, funny, scary, and horny stories documenting the real sex lives of a wide range of men. It also details a continuous chronology spanning nearly a century of wild sex.

This is queer sex as it really is, not packaged and marketed for a audience, but brutal, honest and down and dirty !

Straight to Hell

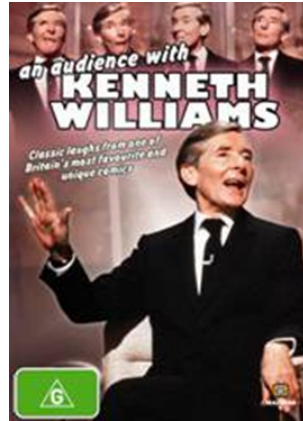
<http://straight-to-hell.net>



MUSIC & COMEDY



An Audience with Kenneth Williams Madman Entertainment R4 DVD



An Audience with Kenneth Williams dates from 1983 and is a delightful, witty and amusing series of recollections about his life and experiences, especially on stage and at the movies.

Williams begins with recollections of his time in the Army, and then reflects on his stage and radio experiences onto the Carry On films. He offers a couple of songs including a Ballad and a fun parody of a French ditty.

Williams is best known for his outrageously camp manner and his unique form of English upper class wit. It is true that his humour is very "stereotypical" yet in many ways this is the only way many gay men could be visible in this early period. It is too easy to forget the context of these comedies and to attempt to read modern day "political correctness" back into the past and not appreciate the period in which his style of comedy developed.

Certainly looking back much of the "Carry On" humour and the Kenneth Williams style could be seen as dated but he still puts on a damn good show and so many of his memories are filled with pathos as well as wit and humour. The twenty six Carry On films in which he starred still sell well and surprisingly new fans are discovering them on a regular basis.

There is also a smell of bitterness and pain under the humour, Williams clearly took the dandy effete role as a defence against the kind of world he was forced to live in. His life was a very difficult one, he was a suspect in the death of his homophobic father and he was never able to form long term relationships. He died by his own hand in 1998.

The Cho Show R4 DVD Beyond Home Entertainment



Margaret Cho is a one off, it is clear to me that when they made her they "broke the mould". She is a unique comedian who confronts, amuses and shocks in equal amounts.

For many she is an acquired taste since she is brutally honest about herself, her sexuality and the world around her.

She explores her own experience as a Korean, as a woman and as a bi-sexual with blistering humour which at times would even make a "working girl" blush. At the same time she doesn't really sound dirty, sure she talks about sex, a lot, but it is with a level of self deprecating humour that it can hardly be considered offensive.

Margaret Cho was born in 1968 and raised in San Francisco. "It was different than any other place on Earth," she says. "I grew up and went to grammar school on Haight Street during the '70s. There were old hippies, ex-druggies, burn-outs from the '60s, drag queens, and Chinese people. To say it was a melting pot - that's the least of it. It was a really confusing, enlightening, wonderful time."

She began stand up comedy at a young age and won a comedy context where the first prize was opening for Jerry Seinfeld. She moved to L.A. and starred in the ABC sitcom "All American Girl". She found the experience exasperating as she was expected to play a role, that of "ethnic Korean" rather than being herself.

She was forced to lose a large amount of weight, which damaged her health, and play a role which was stereotyped, to say the least. It flopped big time and was cancelled.



Margaret Cho

She decided from that time onwards her comedy would reflect her own experience of life without compromise or fulfilling the expectations of others. It was a big risk considering the nature of the material she presented.

Her first major show "I'm the One That I Want" was a rip-roaring success celebrating her brutally honest type of humour which explores everything from self image to women's issues, sex to gay rights, politics to her Korean parents. This was followed by "Notorious C.H.O.," "Revolution" and "State of Emergency" – the last exploring her emerging political activism and disgust with the growing influence of the far right in the American political landscape.

In 2007 she developed new show called Beautiful which explores issues relating to self image and inner beauty. It is an extremely personal and powerful performance matching humour with a deep perception about the human condition.

"I want to explore the nature of beauty. What is funny and scary about it, why we often don't feel beautiful because our society's standards are so rigid and unattainable. A D.J once asked me, "If you woke up tomorrow and you were beautiful, what would you do? If you were, blonde, blue-

eyed, 5 foot 11, and weighed 100 pounds, what would you do?!?" Well, I probably wouldn't get up in that case, because I'd be too weak to stand. If that is his only idea of beauty then I feel really sorry for him. I want everyone to feel beautiful and I want to do it with laughter. Why not feel good about ourselves?"

Some thirteen years after her frustrating foray into television on All American Girl, Cho has returned to television but very much on her own terms. She now has her very own series, The Cho Show.

The Cho Show is a strange amalgam of reality television and comedy. It stars Margaret Cho with a support team of truly eccentric individuals including little person Selene Luna and a selection of her favourite gay men. It also shows her parents playing themselves – they add a remarkably sensitive touch to the series.

Along the way Margaret interviews a range of fascinating people in her own inimitable style, holds fashion shows, wins a Korean award and talks a lot about self respect, love, sex, relationships, politics and growing up as an Ethnic minority in the United States. Once again Cho displays a brutal honesty about herself and those around them but it is never exploitative.

For example, her 3-foot 10-inch high friend Selena Luna comes across as a superbly funny and talented character whom Margaret clearly loves dearly, there is not a moment when you think that she is being used for cheap humour. She is part of the show and indeed empowered by it.

In a way it is testament to Cho's style that she can explore all sorts of issues with all of sorts of people and each one comes away better for it. It is a bit like her beauty pageant, in the end, they all win since their cannot be any losers in a real beauty pageant !

This is a superb series with every episode full of amusing and entertaining comedy, witty dialogue, unusual characters and situations. Cho has the ability to pick just the right situation to bring out the best in herself and others and this series is a real winner.

**Tim Minchin -
So Live
Tim Minchin
R4 DVD
Madman
Entertainment**

Tim Minchin is a very unusual performer, combining superb musicianship, amusing comedic skills and a very savvy stage persona. His skills at the piano and as a singer cannot be faulted, he has a certain "Billy Joel" even "Elton John" sound (though he would be loathe to admit it) with a flair for showmanship.

It is clear that Minchin is professional enough as a musician that he could easily cut it as a jazz or cabaret performer and yet he has decided to work within his own niche market focused on comedy. This makes him at first glance a rather eccentric and devoted artiste.

So live reflects on all manner of subjects including religious intolerance, death, sexuality, war, fatherhood, relationships, gender and anger management. At the same time it is not all serious stuff, along the way we are treated to a fun song about a blow up sex doll and lots of jokes about censorship, sex, language and relationships. Other amusing ballads includes "So Rock" and "Dark Side" – a hilarious send up of would be Goths.



Minchin also explores his emotions in his performance art /song-poems "Angry" and "Mitsubishi Colt" and confronts intolerance with quite some heat.

His song "a ten foot cock and a thousand virgins" is one of the more virulent attacks on religion I have heard in many years. It is nicely constructed to a "Middle Eastern" beat and shows a solid knowledge of comparative religion as well as history. He is stridently atheist and stares down extremists with humour and wit. His musings on religion and science are some of the better sections of his show.

While Minchin has dabbled in acting, his success lies in his mixture of cabaret, music, humour and poetry. His show walks a fine line between comedy and music and while always controversial balances light humour with more taboo subjects such as discussions of Islam, Christianity, the Middle East and so on. Minchin has been quite daring in his willingness to explore subjects many comedians would consider taboo.

While Minchin is an accomplished and professional performer there are aspects of his act however which seem too glib and too polished. His appearance, for example, looks awfully contrived. It is as though he tested the market and felt these "affectations" would work well and hence he created a "look". His slight makeup and trendy appearance seems so damn artificial it gets on your nerves after a while. Even his lack of shoes is part of his trademarked presentation.

I am sure as "Emo" goes out and something else comes in his persona will transform to suit the market. This is one very savvy performer with his finger on the dollar value of the comedy pulse.

While his songs have a nice witty edge, they also seem to lack any great depth. His peace song on Palestine is a fun reflection on religious prohibitions against eating pork yet it says little else. It is much the same as his environmental song which simply focuses on "canvas bags".

As works of comedy they share the same technique as many of his other ditties.





They take a central ideological motif and use satire to ridicule it while padding the song out with long musical riffs.

The more you listen to them the more like advertising jingles they become and the less perceptive they seem.

Songs such as Rock and Roll Nerd and Dark Side actually seem rather insightful as they represent his essential quandary. When he tells us he married the woman to whom he lost his virginity I am not surprised. Here is an artiste who does not really have a deep perception of the world around him and lacks life experience. His knack for song writing and musical skills means he has a gimmick which gets him noticed, but he does not seem to have been through the "school of hard knocks".

Now this may seem rather harsh, but truly communicative comedians need depth and I just do not feel Minchin, at this stage of his career anyway, has it.

A lot of his music actually sounds much the same and the comedy wears thin fairly quickly. Yes there is the shock value of his constantly

colourful language and songs about sex and religion, but in the end there is not a lot else. After we stop being shocked, we start being a little bored.

I am not saying his comedic style is not funny and at times very entertaining. He is certainly a very "trendy" comedian and appears on the right shows and at the right comedy festivals. But with the amount of potential talent he clearly has I think as consumers we can demand a lot more. He is "technically accomplished" and good at what he does but that does not make him great.

In my mind Minchin is like a new vat of Whiskey. It has just been made, has all the right ingredients, superb aroma and just the right balance to create something delicious. But it needs to age. At this early stage it is damn good but until it reaches that magic level of maturity it is not brilliant.

I would like to see Minchin in twenty years when his wife has had a few more kids and his life has been a bit more challenging. Maybe his daughter has a drug habit and his son has become a fundamentalist Christian. His mother has an artificial leg and he has had a few prostate checks. He is balding and has a middle age paunch. He has had some very lean times in his career when he played singalongs for local clubs. He has been drinking a little too much wine and is now ready for a comeback. Maybe then his life experience will match his abilities and he will be truly magnificent.

Tim Minchin - So Live was Filmed in June 2007 in the intimacy of the Sydney Opera House Studio and features the complete two-hour solo performance including material both from "Dark Side" (2005) and "So Rock" (2006).

Special features include:

Melbourne International Comedy Festival Gala 2006 performance - "Canvas Bags"
 Melbourne International Comedy Festival Gala 2006 performance - "The Guilt Song"
 Spicks and Specks 2006 TV performances - "Song for Alan Brough"
 Spicks and Specks 2007 TV performances - - "The Adam Hillsong"
 The Sideshow 2007 TV performances - "Not Perfect"
 BBC Comedy Shuffle 2007 TV performance - "Canvas Bags"

Matryomin Ensemble: Mable

Matryomin is the unique, original electronic musical instrument invented by Masami Takeuchi in 1999. It is an adaption of the Theremin – an unusual electro-musical instrument invented in Russia. It has been shaped into the form of a Russian traditional wooden doll, Matrioshka.

It fits the form of Matrioshka perfectly performing five octaves in range. The distance of one octave at Low-Middle range is equal to Etherwave Theremin of Moog Music Inc. If you have acquired the basic techniques of playing the Theremin on the Etherwave Theremin, you can enjoy playing Matryomin the same way. Matryomin is only pitch controlled Theremin on market.

Mandarin Electron, a company directed by Masami Takeuchi, started manufacturing Matryomin on a commercial basis in 2003. Now, Matryomin is going on 2nd generation model. Their website is <http://www.mandarinelectron.com>

The matryomin ensemble "Mable" is a ensemble made up of matrioshka shaped Theremin players. All members are expert Thereminists who have studied under Masami Takeuchi. Mable has performed on many TV programs, radio shows and concerts in Japan, England, Germany and Russia. They have released their first CD Shokou (morgenrote) in Japan. It is a mixture of classic tracks and more popular music such as a Beach Boys compilation.

As it is only available in Japan you can email masami@theremin.jp to arrange to purchase the CD.



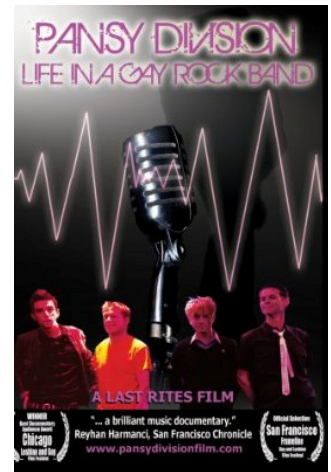
Pansy Division: Life in a Gay Rock Band All Region NTSC DVD Alternative Tentacles 2009

Pansy Division has always been an enigma of a band, too queer for many punks and rockers and too outspoken for much of the Gay community. In many ways they represented (and still do) the dichotomy in the LGBT community between those who beg for acceptance and just want to be like everybody else with a white picket fence and 2.5 adopted children (the contemptuous tone is deliberate!) and those who could not give a sh*t and just are who they are.

Pansy Division started in 1991 when gay music was still very much in the closet. Sure there were gay artists and songs with queer themes but nothing like a totally out punk group with all "in your face" gay members and a very confronting attitude and tone. They began what became known as "Queercore" and somehow made a name for themselves with little radio airtime and only being signed to small record labels. Along the way they achieved some amazing breaks, such as opening for Green Day and when Billie Joe stood shoulder to shoulder with Pansy Division and refused to play venues that wanted to ban them. But also have to deal with constant harassment from the music industry who could not deal with their explicit lyrics, it seems it is fine for straight bands to promote their sexuality but queer bands sound be subtle.

Their music explored a range of themes, especially in the early days it was marked with a sense of erotic play as well as humour. Who can forget such amusing songs as "Touch my Joe Camel" or "Bed and Teds Homosexual Adventure" or the classic rewrite of Teen Spirit as Queer Spirit.

At the same time Pansy Division always seemed to have an angry edge and this certainly continued through the AIDS explosion. Even the latest album "That's So Gay" offers a nice balance of punk, rock, erotic fun and solid lyricism.





Pansy Division 2009

The Band is primarily made up of Ginoli and Chris Freeman and various drummers, some twelve in the last twenty years. It is amazing to think how long they have lasted and still kept true to their vision of what queercore music should be.

Director Michael Carmona creates a fascinating documentary through a wide and diverse range of interviews and footage of various shows and live performances. In many ways the documentary is also an exploration of how a gay band can communicate with different audiences, many of which are straight. It was a difficult journey including many hair-raising confrontations with homophobia, at times the band didn't know if "their van would be put on fire," recalls Freeman.

There is also a bonus DVD of live performances.

Pansy Division

Web: <http://www.pansydivision.com>

Pansy Division: Life in a Gay Rock Band
Latest CD: "That's So Gay"

Alternative Tentacles

Web: <http://www.alternativetentacles.com>

Deflowered:
My Life in Pansy Division
Jon Ginoli
Cleiss Press 2009

Web: <http://www.cleispress.com>

(Review in Book Section)

Tiki for the Atomic Age **Kava Kon** **Dionysus Records** **(2009)**



It is always interesting to see how trends come in cycles. In the 1950's Tiki Music and the sounds of the like of Les Baxter and Martin Denny were considered the height of taste, bringing together exotic soundscapes with jazz, primitivism and native beats. With a resurgence of interest in such music has come a wide range of lounge, cocktail and retro mood music.

In my mind however there has always been something fascinating about the Tiki sound with its sound effects, mood music, primitivism and evocative riffs. I am always on the lookout for modern explorations but they are few and far between.

In 2004, Nels Truesdell and Bob Kress formed Kava Kon as a magical escape from the urban decay surrounding them in their former home city of Detroit. The duo created a new form of music combining the modern with the primitive; electronica and exotica!

Kava Kon music is a unique blend of exotica, mood music, spaghetti western, electronica, cocktail lounge, bossa nova, and 1950s/60s b-movie soundtracks. Perfect music for tiki bars, cocktail parties, and/or people looking for an exotic getaway.

Tiki for the Atomic Age is their new album and truly gets under your skin; every time you listen to it you hear something new. It creates a powerful evocative mood which is both playful and hypnotic.

There are tracks which sound like world music and others which are more like lounge, some evoke an atmosphere of B movies, spaghetti westerns and space exploration, others seem oh so hip and make you want to get a cocktail.

This is an album you will want to play over and over again.

The cover art by Canadian pop surrealist painter Heather Watts adds a nice touch to an already superb album !

ART & ARTISTS



The Blood of the Mountain is the Hammer of God

The Art of Malleus

Supernatural Cat

Web: <http://www.supernaturalcat.com>

Malleus has created some of the most fascinating screen-prints and rock concert posters of the new millennium. Following in the great cycle of event-poster making dating back centuries, their imagination knows no limits. These Italian artists are inspired designers and printmakers both.

What is striking about their work is that they are equally classicists and modernists, gleefully so – in the new musical and social currents. You see tradition in the elegant curves they play with, as well as a darker and turbulent truth that is haunting. Their intent is to disturb. What Malleus gives is a new viewpoint that makes us sometimes shudder at what is revealed, but we are comforted by the elegance of their touch. This is soulful work....

Paul Grushkin

The Art of Rock

The Art of Modern Rock

The Blood of the Mountain is the Hammer of God is the first printed collection of the work of Malleus. Malleus is a trio of artists (Poia, Urlo and Lu) who together explore themes of rock music, sexuality and dark style.

The name they have taken gives some intimation of the deeply erotic and taboo breaking nature of their work. Malleus is the Latin word for hammer and it reflects the trio's two obsessions. The first is Music where the term malleus is a bone in the middle ear.

The second is eroticism and female sexuality with a tendency towards perversion and darkness. This can be related, for example, to the infamous inquisitional witch finders manual "Malleus Maleficarum" (1486) – "The Hammer against Witches" which seems to spend as much time focused on sexuality as it does on heresy.



Malleus constantly returns to these themes of sex, music, the bizarre and death and unites them in unique and compelling ways. The poster for The Melvins, for example, has a beautiful woman with long flowing hair dripping blood which is congealing into a pool at her feet, she is surmounted by a huge blue brain which is lined with red veins and overlaid with a crown of thorns; what a combination of images !

The Blood of the Mountain is the Hammer of God is a truly powerful and seductive book compiling Malleus' output over five years of collaboration. It is 112 pages in length, full colour and oversized (9" by 13"). The quality of the book cannot be faulted reproducing the images in the highest quality.

The images are striking, beautiful and brimming with colour, eroticism and fantasy.



They are supernatural, psychedelic and at times snidely humorous.

"The Hammer of God" is structured in four main chapters, branching the artworks from the beginnings until today.

Malleus' array of work includes numerous gig posters for rock bands such as Antony and the Johnsons, Aphex Twin, Blue Cheer, Beck, Blues Explosion, Brant Bjork, Chemical Brothers, The Cure, Current 93, Deftones, Dinosaur Jr, The Dresden Dolls, Down, Earth, The Flaming Lips, Iggy Pop & the Stooges, Incubus, Isis, Mark Lanegan, Liars, Linkin Park, The Mars Volta, The Melvins, Mogway, Motorpsycho, Monster Magnet, Mudhoney, Om, The Prodigy, Queens of The Stone Age, Sex Pistols, Sigur Ros and Sonic Youth.

They have also produced editorial illustrations and CD covers for a diverse group of clients and these are also illustrated.

The Hammer of God also includes a commentary by various artists, collectors and friends including Paul Grushkin and Dennis King (The Art of Rock and the Art of Modern Rock), Firehouse, David Tibet (Current 93), Jermaine Rogers (Poster Artist), Alan Forbes (Poster Artist), Justine Hampton (poster artist) Amanda

Palmer (Dresden Dolls), Al Cisneros (Sleep, Om), Brant Bjork, and various others.

Malleus also run a thriving website selling their unique works of art. It is well worth a visit:

Malleus Rock Art Lab

Web: <http://www.malleusdelic.com>

**Bottomless
Cocktail
The Art of Shag
Shag
Last Gasp**



A stunning 100 page soft cover exploring the ever so trendy world of Shag (Josh Agle – last two letters of his first name and first two of his last). Blending cartoon, tiki aesthetic, retro, skeletons, technology and vintage illustration, Shag's style is quite unique. It is both nostalgic and yet modern, presented with a splash of snide humour and sarcasm.

While it certainly has a retro feel it embraces all manner of modern culture with a special love of pop culture and music. Most of his scenes are filled to the brim with action and feel as though you are walking into the middle of a situation. The characters all seem to be interacting with each other, to the things around them and to the outside world.

Bottomless cocktail is thematically presented covering such diverse subjects as Conspicuous Consumption, Woman Recumbent, The Friendly Face of Evil, The Male of the Species, Dangerous Women and Music After Midnight, Against Nature, A Gruesome Game and Shag Schwag covering accessories, bags etc.

The illustrations are reproduced in high quality colour which reflects the unique palette used by Shag to such an effect, there is an abundance of oranges, greens and blues.

There are also a couple of introductions.

His website is also a wealth of shagness: <http://www.shag.com>

Shag is also helping the Ennis House Foundation raise funds to restore the world famous 1924 house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.



These hand-pulled serigraphs are available exclusively from the Foundation, and proceeds will go toward the restoration and reopening of this major architectural work. Each large 11 color serigraph print is 18" x 42" is \$250 and comes with a certificate of authenticity.

See:

<http://www.shag.com/donnaconbambino/EnnisHouse.html>

**Haunted Paradise
Glenn Barr
La Luz De Jesus
Press/ Billy Shire Fine
Arts
Last Gasp**

Haunted Paradise is a 161 page hardback full colour journey into the work of Glenn Barr. The book includes reproductions of his paintings, drawings and photographs since 2001. The various Sketches and drawings included throughout the book offer us an inside view of the development of his unique style of work.



His photography, as striking as his art, documents his workspace and presents a perspective of the Detroit landscape from Barr's eyes. In -depth essays and a short interview by Carlo McCormick, J.J. Marcucci and Jerry Vile kick off this journey.

Glenn Barr lives in a 1960's universe, swinging and seedy, sexy yet stung out. It is filled to the brim with robots, creatures, vixens, femme fatales and beautiful babes. Clearly influenced by both pulp art and comics his work is surreal and compelling.

Barr is considered one of Detroit's most celebrated and successful underground artists. He

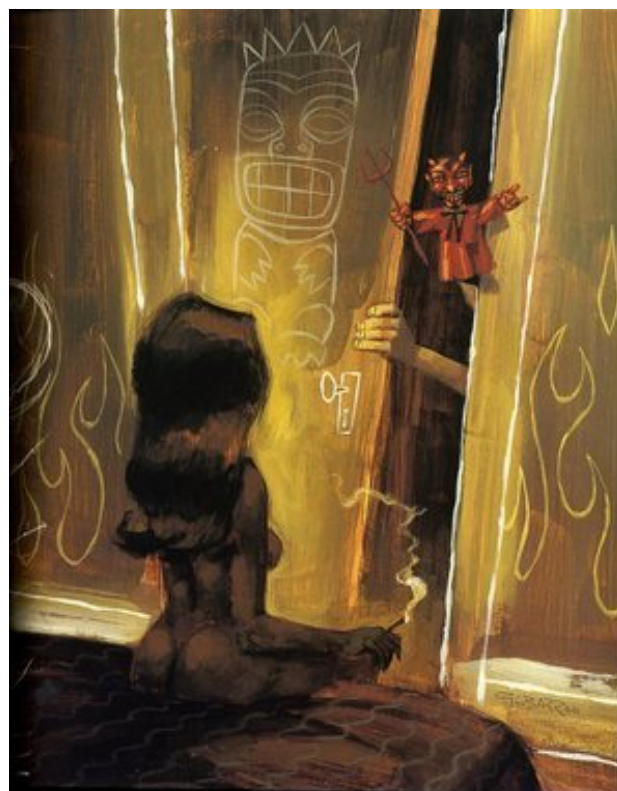
broke hit the national scene running with his first exhibition, "Beneath the Valley of the Brain" at Hollywood's La Luz de Jesus Gallery in 2001. As a teenager, Barr drew and painted as well as playing in a band. It was the beginning of a long-term relationship between Barr's art and music that would lead

him to the design of album art for local legends The Detroit Cobras and The Witches as well as national acts such as Funkdoobiest.

After studying illustration at the College for Creative Studies, Barr worked on a series of comics and graphic novels during the 1990's including Mars on Earth, the four-volume Brooklyn Dreams, and a series of Factoid "Big Books." No stranger to Los Angeles and its reputation for some of the most twisted animation in history, Barr also worked as background stylist for The Ren and Stimpy Show, Bjork's "I Miss You" video and The New Woody Woodpecker Show. He decided in 2000 to work full time at painting.

This is a volume which will give you hours of enjoyment as you reflect over his art, explore the themes of his work and attempt to decode its various levels of imagery.

Anticipation by Glenn Barr



Mysterium Fidei
Paintings and Drawings by Daniel Martin
Díaz
La Luz De Jesus and Billy Shire Fine Arts
Press 2008

"broodingly personal...with a compelling, esoteric edge."

The Los Angeles Times

Mysterium Fidei or the Mysteries of faith is an idiosyncratic exploration of the world of religious symbolism by Daniel Martin Díaz. For Díaz Faith is without "logical explanation" and hence bubbles up from the unconscious in a variety of strange and unusual forms. It could be easily said that his work is influenced as much by esotericism, occultism, alchemy, Freud and Jung as Catholicism and his Mexican upbringing.

Examining his work it is hard to believe that his is self taught, he uses the ancient egg tempera and resin oil painting technique on distressed wood to create works which seem literally Medieval in presentation if not perhaps heretical in content.

His work has been exhibited in over 50 solo and group exhibitions in 17 states of America and eight countries, including three international touring exhibitions, and has been acquired for the permanent collections of nine art museums nationwide.

Mysterium Natura



His influences include Jan van Eyck, Pieter Bruegel, and Hieronymus Bosch, Byzantine iconography, Alchemy, esotericism, occultism, Medieval anatomical and naturalist art and engravings.



He takes familiar iconography found within Catholicism and Mexican folk art and moves it into esoteric and symbolic territory. For example, in "Verberantia," the eye is first drawn to the image of Christ bleeding on the ground. This is what one may expect to see in a work on spiritual suffering. Yet as your eyes moves up, you notice a hand floating above his bloodied back with a single all-seeing Illuminati style eye painted on its palm. Aside it is a skull. The body of Christ is entangled with a serpent like creature of which a second is seen on the ground. The finale is the statement Condemnant quod non intellegunt – they condemn that which they do not understand. The image has a strongly Gnostic as well as esoteric feel with the serpent seemingly representing wisdom rather than evil. Throughout his art there is an emphasis on Latin quotes, numerology, symbolism and iconography.

Many of his images seem to combine Gnostic and esoteric themes with Mexican folk traditions to create quite a unique religious vision. In many ways they seem truly unconscious as even Díaz himself admits he simply paints what he experiences in his mind's eye. "I do not claim to understand these questions. I just paint and let them reveal themselves to me."

Mysterium Fidei - Paintings and Drawings by Daniel Martin Díaz is a high quality Hardcover, 120 pages in length and 10" x 10" in size. The cover is simply stunning; it is made of black cloth and has a silver coloured letter-pressed decoration which surrounds a cut out Díaz image.

There is an introduction and essays by Michael M. Brescia, Ph.D., Gloria Fraser Giffords, John David Long-García, M.A., and Paula Catherine Valencia.

La Luz De Jesus
Web: <http://www.laluzdejesus.com>



AESTHETIC VIDEO ART ON DEMAND

Surrealist Motion Volume One

Blu Ray (All Region)

Filmic Art

Web: <http://www.filmicart.com>

Microcinema

Web: <http://www.microcinemadvd.com>

Surrealist Motion Volume One uses the latest technology of Blu Ray to transform your flat screen television into a living digital painting. The quality of this Blu-ray cannot be faulted. It is of the very highest quality with deep intense colours.

It is easy to use and offers continuous play with auto repeat. It has been mastered in 1080p at an impressive bit-rate (>35 Mbit/s).

Surrealism emerged as a new art form between World War I & II and has been celebrated ever since. It influenced not only art but fiction, cinema and indeed, most creative styles.

However since Surrealism was primarily expressed in paintings and etchings, such works have only been experienced in a static way. Now you can see surrealism like never before with incredible living works of video art. These are four works beautifully presented, each offer-

Prairie Serenades directed by Jonathan



ing a different take on Surrealism.

Be intrigued by how the daylight shifts in an empty room or how the stare of an eye floats in a desert dream.

Marvel at how churches lift into the sky and at an unusual castle that hovers in the air.



Room with a View directed by Jonathan Knapé

In this work we have set-up a room with some objects that we have paraphrased from Rene Magritte.

This Castle is not Located in the Pyrenees directed by Jonathan Knapé

The painting Castle in the Pyrenees 1959 by Magritte has obviously been an inspiration for us in the creation of this work.

Prairie Serenades directed by Jonathan Knapé

In Magritte's work Voice of the Winds from 1928, three iron bells hover above the ground symbolizing the sound of the wind. In our work there are three wooden churches on a prairie.

Persistence of the Watchful Eye directed by Jonathan Knapé

In this work, we have used Salvador Dali and his painting Persistence of Memory from 1931 as inspiration.

This is an interesting product which can work as a digital art installation in your home, a background for entertaining or just something unusual to watch and reflect on.

You can also spend quite a bit of time decoding the various influences on these video clips. Indeed I also think this could be used as a great art education tool !

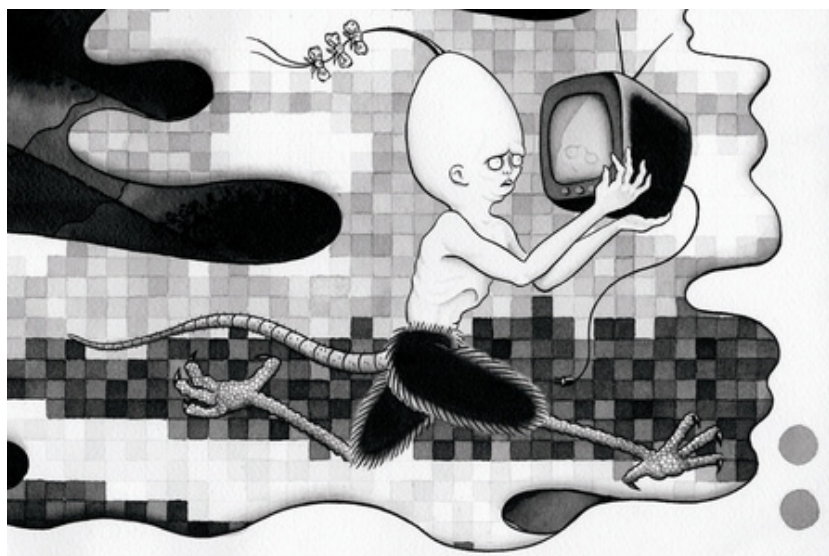


Undigested Kernel
The Vacation Pictures of Scott Harrison
Scott Harrison
La Luz De Jesus Press
Web: <http://www.laluzdejesuspress.com>

"Scott Harrison is the hyperactive love child of Aubrey Beardsley and Basil Wolverton. Imagine, if you can... Definitely not for the faint of heart."
Thomas Woodruff

Scott Harrison is an internationally recognized tattoo artist, famous for his nightmarish cartoon art, twisted and shocking tattoo design and unique personal style. He has tattooed all over the States as well as Europe and Japan. His clients have included such diverse celebrities as Master P, Kiki Smith and Tony Fitzpatrick.

Harrison's paintings have been exhibited in galleries and museums around North America and Europe. It is hard to describe the vision that presents itself when you first see his work, Harrison's art is a mixture of the nightmare and the cartoon presented with a dash of the dark and extreme. Harrison revels in the underbelly of life



including explicit sexuality and violence, yet always with a certain playfulness and humour.

There are many reoccurring motifs and characters which are bizarre and bewildering. For example one of whom seems to be his favourite character is an egg-headed half "human" with a single length of hair hanging from the back of his head. His lower body seems to have rat like legs and chicken like feet.

Various cartoons explore this creature's life and the unique problems he experiences.

In one image you have him attempting to watch television as he runs from an unknown encroaching foe in the form of a shadow. In another he sits terrified in a rowboat with a female skeleton with a pony tail holding an axe.

The images are surreal, monstrous, erotic and playful; there are clowns, creatures, animals, dogs, faceless people, sex and violence.

It is as though the Id has erupted into daytime cartoons and been recorded in a black and white tattoo style ! His work seems to embody a preoccupation with the unconscious drives most of us tend to ignore or, at least, downplay. Sex, violence, consumerism, thought and emotion, they are all encoded into his images.

His work is incredibly detailed and makes excellent use of the power of black and white.

It is a high quality hardcover, 8" x 6" landscape in size and 96 pages in length. It features a forward by Don Ed Hardy and Introduction by David Quale.

ATOMIC MONKEY



Count Monkula

Atomic Monkey's popular character Franken Monkey has found a new friend to play with... Count Monkula!! Count Monkula is a seriously cool dude and looks wickedly cute. He is available in brown and pink editions and each is a limited 500 piece run.

Count Monkula is 4" in height, shows remarkable detail and comes complete with a little batty friend on a hard wire.

The count comes packaged in a nicely designed box.

Tou Tou

Tou Tou is a pleather (artificial leather) Toy Teddy designed by Joe Kwong of Atomic Monkey and boy does he look adorable.



He is 8" in height and very nicely made. The silver robot bear is especially nice, looking all outta space like, but I also like the blue bear as well.

These are very desirable and Atomic Monkey certainly have not scrimped on quality. Each

bear has his own unique little twist. The cuddly blue bear even has his own little T-shirt.

There are other colours too but get in quick, they are in limited numbers.

H.U.T.A



Feel like you can do pretty much anything? Prepare to be amazed, confused, and outdone! H.U.T.A., an Atomic Monkey exclusive, will baffle your mind with it's incredible, seemingly impossible feat! Standing 4" tall, this detailed figure is sure to amaze, stun and disturb everyone who sees it. It is impressive from any angle you look at it and will certainly be the ultimate conversation piece !

H.U.T.A's vulgar yet incredibly amusing design by Doyle Trankina is, quite literally, what you think it is. His head's up his arse and he likes to look at life from that direction !

He has a nice bronze tan and some rather good muscle tone !

Web: <http://www.atomicmonkeyltd.com/>



Esc Toys 2009

Web: <http://www.esctoy.com>

"She uses her weapon as her art and your body is her canvas."

The word Kissaki is Japanese and translates to "point of the blade." Kissaki measures at over 10" in height. Designed by Erick Scarecrow Kissaki is an enigmatic creation. The first thing you notice is the high quality of the production. It shows an eye for detail and has an impressive colour scheme with an emphasis on oranges and yellows.

On the surface Kissaki is an innocent even cute Anime figure, but beneath the carefully crafted robes she is an assassin.

Kissaki is a mixture of traditional Asian style and more modern even urban elements. She is wearing a robe with extra long sleeves as is



common in both Anime and Manga while the various folds in the robe are very nicely presented.

She wears Samurai sandals and has two swords. At first sight the ends of the swords look like hands and you think they are her arms, but actually her arms are hidden in her sleeves and the hands on the swords are stylized elements. They are quite eye catching. Her feet are large which creates a sturdy base for the figure.

Her face is reddish-range with a calm complexion, her hair is "active" and gives Kissaki a very lifelike look. The figure has one point of articulation in the neck.

Kissaki is presented in a nice window box with a full size image of Kissaki on the back, it has with solid supports for sending in the post.

Esc has also released a range of diverse variations on the figure in limited numbers including a Wicked and Sandstorm edition.





My Little Cthulhu

John Kovalic

Dreamland Toyworks

Wizard Sleeve Toys

Web: <http://www.wizardsleevetoy.com/>

USA Today called John Kovalic a "Hot Pick." His creations include the hit comic book Dork Tower, as well as Snapdragon and many other features. His work has appeared everywhere from The New York Times and The Washington Post to Rolling Stone and Dragon Magazine.

My Little Cthulhu is a seriously cute yet dark and brooding figure based on the major figure within the cult mythos created by H.P. Lovecraft. Cthulhu is an entity which first appeared in the short story "The Call of Cthulhu" when it was published in Weird Tales in 1928. He (it ?) is one of the Great Old Ones and is described as



being of huge size, having a hideous appearance and evoking terror in the hearts of all who see him.

My Little Cthulhu takes the horror of Cthulhu and turns it into a strange, eccentric and cutesy vinyl figure which is 8" in height. He is beautifully constructed with a very large head from which sprouts three tentacles.

He has little beady eyes and two arms which have been made to hold his victims, who can be torn into three pieces. Two horrified victims come in the pack, you can purchase more separately.

My Little Cthulhu comes in bright green and has yellow markings on his back and front as well as two small wings.



Bunnywith Siamese Twin Rock America Toys Wizard Sleeve Toys

As featured in Alex Pardee's brand new comic series Bunnywith! The only arm-less bunny plush on the planet makes his presence known.



This lovable if not a little creepy bunny stands about 12" high, and features posable floppy legs, posable ears, and a very friendly if not sad smile. Of course, he has no arms !

He comes stitched together with his conjoined twin for twice the fun !

You can hug them, but he/they cannot hug you back !!

Moofia - Mozzarella
Tokidoki
Wizard Sleeve Toys



Mozzarella is the leader of the Moofia, a gang assembled to extort milk from the lunchboxes of schoolyard bullies. Mozzarella is loving and kind to good kids, but ruthless and feared by those who harass the innocent. If you're a bully, look out! Mozzarella is coming for you.

Mozzarella packs tommy gun heat, and comes with a 2.5 inch smiling bullet companion.

The original Moofia Mozzarella is made from Rotocast vinyl and is 6 inches tall, presented in Window box packaging.



A new version of Mozzarella has been released in Plush Doll form and what a little beauty. Mozzarella is the amongst the first tokidoki characters to appear in plush doll form. Some 9 inches in height with all the characteristics of the vinyl doll, there is even a plush tommy gun !!

It is made from carefully selected soft fleece and made with an eye for detail including cute yellow ear rings and sensitive ears !

Mozzarella Plus is presented in a protective plastic bag with a descriptive tag which also doubles as a silver heart skull and cross bones.

These items are available from Wizard Sleeve Toys which also offers a wide range of other collectibles. De-

signer art toys, magazines, books, art prints and lots more. They distribute products from a diverse range of companies include many rare and limited edition releases direct from the designers themselves.



Wizard Sleeve Toys was founded by Mike Franco in the summer of 2008 due to his fascination with designer art toys and low brow art and is built on collaboration with existing and upcoming artists.

Wizard Sleeve Toys plans to put out a number of their own exclusive, limited-edition pieces in 2009 and beyond created by some of the industry's top designers and some newbies.

You can sign up for the WST newsletter from their website and this includes news, exclusive releases, events and special offers.

Their site also hosts a comprehensive forum which covers everything from announcements to discussions of designers toys. You can post your own collection, buy sell and trade and, of course, talk about toys.

Their blog offers all the latest news including discount coupons, interviews, film clips and lots more. Each month there is also a featured toy, interview, artist and jewellery.

Wizard Sleeve Toys Blog

Web: <http://www.wstworldwide.com/>

Snug- GunS

Akimbo

Web: <http://www.snug-guns.com>

Relieve all that pent up aggression with Snug GunS.

Snug-gunS are the new very cool and rather explosive plush toys by Akimbo. From the dangerous mind of multimedia artist, motorcycle tinkerer and super-crafter Paige Kayner, these little guys are just bristling with lethal doses of fun. Here, at last, is a way to be safely armed in a very amusing and fun way.

Each design is silk-screened onto soft mil-spec cotton jersey with striking graphics and stuffed with weapons-grade polyester fiberfill for enhanced durability in battlefield conditions...or even in your own home! They are very solid and will easily last through even the most action packed pillow fight. The images are clear and bright and are a delight to look at.

The ultimate weapon for your next pillow fight, Snug-gunS come in three action-packed styles: the Hand Grenade, the Auto Pistol, and the Mine Pillow.

Snug-gunS Auto Pistol

This is a real delight, it looks superb and the image of the pistol is too clear for comfort !

Each one has been lovingly crafted using hand-fitted components for best accuracy. This rod has all the power you'll ever need to defend yourself against boring TV programs and annoying computer games



Snug-gunS Hand Grenade

The perfect size and weight for hurling at those unwanted guests and annoying loved ones. They're a real blast!

They don't hurt when they hit but they certainly give a damn good shock.

Snug-gunS Mine Pillow

The place to rest your weary head after you have defeated the enemy and need a good sleep.



These are great items, reasonably priced and will certainly spice up any household !



Z.O.M.B.I.E Series 1 October Toys

*Zillions Of Mutated Bodies
Infecting Everyone!*

Z.O.M.B.I.E Series 1 are flesh eating fiends which are about 2" tall and available in toxic green, pale blue, glow-in-the-dark, and white.



Each one is quite detailed and it would be reasonable to call them "micro statues". There is School Girl, Rockabilly, Bathtime, School Boy, and the Ape!

There is also a set of Art Cards which are rather nice. They include nine trading cards each one by a different artist who has been inspired by the Z.O.M.B.I.E Series ! If you buy all four coloured Z.O.M.B.I.E sets you get the cards free.

You can also use the Z.O.M.B.I.E's in a game, pdfs are provided of the rules and maps to get you going !

Web: <http://www.octobertoys.com>

October Toys Z.O.M.B.I.E Game

<http://www.octobertoys.com/zombie/index.php>

Mimobot Designer USB Drives

Mimoco (pronounced MEE-mo-co) is a Boston-based design house which fuses the art of contemporary characters with the functionality of personal data storage devices. Mimobot are designer USB Flash Drives which are both beautiful and practical offering unique character and presentation. There are many different series, the more commercial products are Star Wars, Domo, Halo and Happy Tree Friends.

Other series include the artist and community designed character series and the ones I like best, the original characters including Psy, Pty, rayD80 and Pupstar.

Each series includes such personalization as mimoByte sound software which randomly plays character specific sounds and voices every time your Mimobot is inserted or ejected from your computer. While the MimoDesk personalization suite, which is also included with each Mimobot, offers icons, avatars, wallpapers, screensavers, and other surprises related to each character and series to enrich your digital

desktop experience. This personalization of USB drives is quite unique and creates a strange cross over between collectible "toy" and computer accessory. It is a fun and bizarre experience to have a USB drive which makes sounds when you use it and comes with its own selection of images, icons and screensavers. It is as though each character invites you into their world. There is also a MimoZine digital magazine on each drive. Held in your hand, a Mimobot is 2 3/8" x 1 1/8" x 1/2" small, or 60 x 27 x 13mm for you metric system folk.

I personally really like the original characters. For example, rayD80. RayD80 is the upgraded future version of rayD8 and has been blasted into the here-and-now by a lightning bolt charged with time particles.

Now, he follows around his younger, more naive self, protecting him from flash events and broken bones. To understand who rayD80 is we need a bit of history.





Planet Blooh has seen some weird natural occurrences, what with being at the center of the universe and made of silicon and all. But none are quite as unusual as what happened earlier this week! Eyewitness reports claim that rayD8, the skeletal guard of the Underworld, was hit by lightning while underground!

What's more, the lightning bolt seems to have been charged with highly volatile and unpredictable time particles, so when rayD8 was hit, the power of the blast combined with the electrified time particles to rip his future upgraded self, rayD80, into the current time continuum.

RayD80 was, naturally, shocked at realizing he had been pulled into the present (or as he refers to it, "the past"), and immediately set about trying to gather enough memergy to take him back to the future in which he lived (or as he refers to it, "the present... and stop asking me to refer to things"). While in this time, rayD80 has taken it upon himself to guard his naive past/present self from dangers that would lead to more debilitating flash events.

Friends of rayD8 claim that rayD80 has already prevented six such incidents, and has locked himself in his room with a cup of tea and his exhaustion.

RayD80 is a yellow and blue color variant of Mimoco's popular Core Series rayD8 two-faced skeleton character and comes in various configurations from one to eight megabyte.

Another cutie is Ptry. Ptry is a member of the

Mimbot Core Series 2 designer USB flash drives, designed by Dino Alberto in a limited edition of 2,000 units. It also includes Core Series 2 animations, games and you'll get access to the premiere issue of mimoco's mimoZine Digital Magazine, featuring music by Art Brut, comedy by Poykpac, and a rare interview with toy bootlegger Sucklord.

I love the bright colours of Ptry and the little ears ! It comes in its own cute little "coat" which can be linked to a chain so you can carry it around your neck.

I was impressed how fast these drives installed and worked. On Vista they were quickly picked up, did not require any special drivers and offered very fast access time. The software installed easily and included all sorts of nice extras from wallpapers to sounds, screensavers to icons.

They are cute, collectible and very functional – what a lovely combination. There are lots of Mimobots so why not build a collection. You could have different drives for different uses or indeed just for varying moods !!

Other extras include T-Shirts, vinyl toys, dolls and keychains.

Web: <http://www.mimoco.com>

We have a special giveaway offer thanks to Mimoco. Send an email to our promos dept with Mimobot by June 15th and we will choose a few lucky readers to get a random Mimobot ! Remember to include your full name and address in the email.

Email: promotions@synergy-magazine.com



GET READY TO CRUMBLE.

GODZILLA

2000

TRISTAR PICTURES PRESENTS A TOHO PICTURES, INC. PRODUCTION "GODZILLA 2000"
STARRING: TAKEHIRO MURATA NAOMI NISHIDA HIROSHI ABE SHIRO SANO MUSIC BY TAKAYUKI HATTORI DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EFFECTS: KENJI SUZUKI EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: SHOHO TOMIYAMA
SCREENPLAY BY HIROSHI KASHIWABARA & WATARU MIMURA DIRECTED BY TAKAO OKAWARA
DOLBY DIGITAL
DISTRIBUTED THROUGH SONY PICTURES RELEASING
A TRI STAR PICTURE © 2000 TRI STAR PICTURES, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

www.sony.com/godzilla2000